|  |
| --- |
| Notes for researchers **(please delete these paragraphs before submitting your informed consent form to the REC):*** *The structure/format of this information leaflet and consent form template is intended as a guideline only, for information that should be included in the information leaflet for potential participants in your online survey/questionnaire. Researchers may format, amend and/or shorten the form, provided that the required information is included in the letter to participants. Notes for researchers are included in italics below each heading and should be deleted once the relevant information has been inserted.*
* *If the online survey will be advertised by means of electronic communication (e.g. email), please submit the text to be included in the email that will be distributed to potential participants, together with this ethics application. It is advisable that the email contains an abbreviated version of the information included in this participant information leaflet and consent form.*
* *If the online survey will be advertised by means of electronic communication (e.g. email)), it is the researcher’s responsibility to ensure that individual participants do not have the option of replying to all, thereby revealing their identities and/or responses to the email group. It is strongly suggested that email addresses are included only in BC (blind copy) on email correspondence.*
* *Researchers must use Stellenbosch University’s recommended platforms for online surveys/questionnaires. Third-party applications like Google forms or SurveyMonkey are not recommended. The researcher should approach the Research ICT service desk at SU for guidance on using REDCap (*[*https://redcap.sun.ac.za/*](https://redcap.sun.ac.za/)*) or MSForms to administer online surveys. Please log a request for assistance via the Research ICT helpdesk at:* [*https://servicedesk.sun.ac.za/jira/plugins/servlet/theme/portal/22*](https://servicedesk.sun.ac.za/jira/plugins/servlet/theme/portal/22)*.*

***PLEASE NOTE:*** * *Children who understand the basic concepts of research should be given the opportunity to assent to a study. Generally, children aged 7 to 17 should assent to research. This is not a fixed rule; some children younger than 7 may have sufficient insight and understanding to give assent.*
* *If a child refuses to assent, this refusal should be accepted, even if the parents have consented. There may be exceptional cases where this rule does not apply. Consult the REC: SBE Office in such cases.*
* *This template is specifically for children aged 13–17 (adolescents).*
* *This form is* ***ONLY*** *covering* ***assent*** *– the consent given by individuals under the age of 18 years.* ***You will need to obtain written signed informed consent from a parent or legal guardian if your study participants are under the age of 18 years.***
 |

**PARTICIPANT INFORMATION LEAFLET AND ASSENT FORM FOR ONLINE SURVEYS/QUESTIONNAIRES (MINORS\_13-17 Years)**

Form #: **MIN 01**

**TITLE OF THE RESEARCH STUDY:** [*insert]*

**PROJECT ID:** [*insert study ID as it appears on the REC Application form]*

**PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR/RESEARCHER:** [*insert]*

**What is RESEARCH*?***

Research is something we do to find **NEW KNOWLEDGE** about the way things (and people) work. We use research projects or studies to help us find out more about children and teenagers and the things that affect their lives, their schools, their families and their health.

**YOUR PARTICIPATION IN THE STUDY**

1. **Introduction**

We would like to invite you to take part in a research study which involves the completion of an online questionnaire. Please take some time to read the information below which will explain the details of this research study.

1. **Who Is Conducting This Study?**

This research study is conducted by [*insert your name and the names of other researchers involved in the study*].

The researcher(s) (is/are) from the [*insert your SU department*] at Stellenbosch University.

* *[Kindly provide details: state who ‘we’ relates to, that is, whether you are a student registered at Stellenbosch University for a specific degree or part of a research team (names of the team members) and so forth.]*
1. **Voluntary Participation**

Your participation is **completely voluntary** (you are not forced to be part of the study and you will not be in trouble if you do not complete the questionnaire), and you are free to refuse to participate or to stop completing the questionnaire at any time, even if you have agreed to take part in the beginning. However, once you have submitted your completed questionnaire online, you will no longer be able to withdraw your responses as there will be no way of linking your responses back to you.

1. **Why do we invite you to participate?**

You are being asked to participate because…

* *explain this question clearly using the inclusion criteria outlined in your proposal.*
* *explain how/where the participant’s contact details were obtained (email, social media, website).*
1. **What is this research study about?**

This study aims to… / what is the study about?

* *explain in participant-friendly language what your study aims to do and why you are doing it. imagine having a conversation with one of your participants. write in plain English and use the active form; avoid passives as far as possible. this applies to all text that you add to this form.*
* *explain who the study is being conducted by.*
* *explain what sorts of questions participants will be asked in the survey/questionnaire.*
1. **What will be asked of me?**

If you agree to participate you will be requested to…

* *explain this question clearly – including the types of questions that participants will be asked and the approximate length of time it is expected to take them to complete.*
1. **Will I benefit from taking part in this research?**

The potential benefits of this research are…

* *Explain all benefits objectively. If there are no personal benefits then indicate that there are no direct benefits for participating and explain who would be likely to benefit from the findings of the research in the future, e.g. future patients.*
* *If there are rewards / incentives offered for completing the survey, explain this here. Also explain the implications for supplying their name / email and how this will be delinked from their survey responses.*

1. **Are there any risks in my taking part in this research study?**

The potential risks involved in participating in this research are…

* Identify any risks objectively – particularly with respect to protecting participant confidentiality.
* *Explain what will be done with their data and how this will be managed to protect participants’ confidentiality (e.g. by anonymising or de-identifying the data), as well as any limits on confidentiality.*
* *Explain that participants should be aware that the online survey is not being run from a "secure" https server of the kind typically used to handle credit card transactions, so there is a small possibility that responses could be viewed by unauthorized third parties (e.g., computer hackers).*
* *Caution participants against revealing their identities by replying all on group email correspondence.*
1. **How do I contact the researchers?**

If you have any questions or concerns about this study, please feel free to contact the researcher, *[Researcher’s name and surname]* at *[enter your SU contact information],* and/or the study supervisor *[Supervisor’s name and surname]* at *[Supervisor’s SU contact information].*

* [*Please use your SU email address and contact information for contact purposes. We advise our researchers not to use their personal contact details for their own protection and to ensure adequate boundaries between personal and professional activities*]
1. **Who do can I talk to about my rights as a research participant?**

*[The information below must be included in your consent form. This is a regulatory requirement which states that an institutional contact person must be provided to participants if they want to raise concerns or questions*]

***You have the right to decline answering any questions and you can exit the survey at any time without giving a reason***.

If you have questions, concerns, or a complaint regarding your rights as a research participant in this research study, please contact the Research Ethics Committee at [applyethics@sun.ac.za; (+27) 021 808 9183].

1. **Research Ethics approval**

This study has been approved by the **Research Ethics Committee: Social, Behavioural and Education Research at Stellenbosch University (Project ID#…).** The study will be conducted according to the ethical guidelines and principles of South Africa’s Department of Health- South African Ethics in Health Research Guidelines: Principles, Processes and Studies (NDoH 2024).

**SECTIONS TO INCLUDE IN YOUR ASSENT FORM WHERE APPLICABLE**

*Please delete this section if it does not apply to your study.*

**PERMISSION TO HAVE ALL ANONYMOUS DATA SHARED WITH JOURNALS:**

*Please carefully read the statements below (or have them read to you) and think about your choice. No matter what you decide, it will not affect whether you can be in the research study.*

When the study is finished, we want to share what we learned by publishing it in science journals. These journals often ask us to also share the information we collected during the study — but don’t worry, your name or any personal details will not be included.

This means we would like your permission to share your anonymous information (information that cannot be linked back to you) with these journals. We will follow the rules of the POPI Act to make sure your identity stays private and protected.

**Do you give us permission to share your anonymous information with journals?**

**PERMISSION FOR SHARING INFORMATION WITH OTHER RESEARCHERS:**

*Please carefully read the statements below (or have them read to you) and think about your choice. No matter what you decide, it will not affect in anyway.*

In order to do the *research* as we have discussed, we must collect and store information (data) from you. Other investigators from all over the world can ask to use the data in future research [*please indicate if the data will be shared from South Africa, where the data will be stored and who will have access to it]*.

**We want to ask if it’s okay to share some of the information we collect from you in this study with other researchers in the future.**

This information might be shared with researchers in South Africa or in other countries.

* Your name will not be shared. Instead, we will use a special code so no one knows it’s you.
* The information will be kept safe and only shared with people who are allowed to use it for research.
* If we send the information to another country, we will make sure they follow the same rules we do to keep it safe.

Even though we do everything we can to protect your privacy, there is a very small chance someone could figure out who you are. But this is very unlikely.

**Do you give us permission to share your information (without your name) with other researchers?**

**PERMISSION TO KEEP YOUR INFORMATION FOR FUTURE RESEARCH**

Science is always changing. In the future, researchers might find new ways to learn from the information we collect today.

We want to ask if we can keep your information (like recordings, photos, or videos) to use in future research.

* Your name will not be used. We will use a special code instead.
* The information will be stored safely in South Africa.
* Only people who are allowed to do research will be able to use it.
* Any future research using your information must be approved by a special group that checks if the research is safe and fair.

**Do you give us permission to keep your information (without your name) for future research?**

***For each statement, please choose YES or NO by clicking in the relevant box)***

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Statement** | **YES** | **NO** |
| 1. I agree to have my anonymous data shared with journals during publication of results of this study.
 |  |  |
| 1. My information may be shared with other investigators **in South Africa or outside** **South Africa** *(in other countries) (please adapt accordingly)* who are able to conduct further analysis in … [*describe the field of your study].*
 |  |  |
| 1. I agree that my information (data) may be stored for future research in a field related to … *[describe the field of your study]*
 |  |  |

***YOU WILL BE GIVEN A COPY OF THIS CONSENT FORM TO KEEP FOR YOUR RECORDS***

* *There should be an option for participants to download the information leaflet and consent form. If it is not possible to provide a downloadable pdf document on the survey site, consider inserting a link to the document saved on SU Onedrive, for example, or providing instructions for how to take a screen shot so that participants have the option of keeping a copy of the information provided on the survey front page.*

**By clicking START SURVEY** *(modify if the click to continue button is called something else, like NEXT)***you are confirming that you are:**

1. **Below 13-17 years** ;
2. Have read and understood the above explanation about the study; and
3. You agree to participate.
4. You also understand that your participation in this study is strictly voluntary
5. **Your parents have given permission for you to participate.**