

INFORMATION SHEET FOR PARENTS/GUARDIANS – CASE STUDY



The CANTEEN Study: Free School Meals, Diet Quality and Food Insecurity in Secondary School Pupils: a Mixed Methods Study

The school that your child attends is one of several schools in Northern Ireland (NI) and England that have agreed to complete the **second part** of the CANTEEN study. The study is being conducted by researchers from Queen's University Belfast and the University of Birmingham and is funded by the National Institute for Health Research. The following information is in relation to your child taking part in a **group discussion**. Please take time to read the following information carefully to decide whether or not you wish for your child to take part.

What is the aim of the study?

Not having enough money to buy food is known as **food insecurity** and is common in UK children. Free School Meals are offered to children based on household income. About 1 in 5 pupils do not take their Free School Meals. The CANTEEN study aims to find out a) what influences whether pupils in secondary schools in Northern Ireland and England take their Free School Meal, b) how Free School Meals are related to the quality of the food children eat and their food insecurity and c) whether changing who qualifies for Free School Meals would impact the food eaten and food insecurity. Understanding these things will help us to improve national Free School Meal policy. To understand this fully, however, we also need to understand the broader school food environment, how school meals are organised, the canteen setting, the school approach to food education and the culture of the school in relation to food, and healthy eating. All of these things are likely to influence school meal uptake in general, as well as uptake of Free School Meals. The findings of the CANTEEN study are intended to directly influence school food policy and practice for the future, with the ultimate aim of **improving the nutritional intake of secondary school-aged children**.

The study consists of two parts – in the first part, some pupils, parents, school and canteen staff completed questionnaires. We have also gathered some school-based information and observed the school canteen. We now will complete the second part of the study where we focus in on certain schools and gather more detailed information – this is called a case study.

Why is my child being invited to take part in this study?

The second part of the CANTEEN study is being carried out in selected schools in Northern Ireland and the Midlands in England. The Principal at your child's school has agreed for the school to complete the second part of this study. Other pupils from your child's year group (regardless of what they eat for lunch – e.g. school meal, Free School Meals or packed lunch), are also being invited to take part. Some school staff, Principals, caterers and parents/ guardians will be invited to take part separately.

Does my child have to take part?

No, it is up to you to decide whether your child takes part in this study.

IF YOU ARE HAPPY FOR YOUR CHILD TO TAKE PART:

You do not need to do anything. Please read this information sheet carefully and contact the research team if you have any questions. We will also ask your child if they want to take part in the group discussion. They will not have to take part if they don't want to, even if you have said they can. If your child is not taking part, they will continue with all other school activities as usual, they will just not be asked questions by our research team.

IF YOU DO NOT WANT YOUR CHILD TO TAKE PART:

Please complete the parent opt-out form via the link provided. If the opt-out form was provided to you as a paper copy, please complete and return the form to your child's school. Alternatively, if you would like to complete the opt-out form with a member of the research team over a telephone or video call, please email: canteenstudy@qub.ac.uk and we will arrange this with you.

What happens if I change my mind about my child taking part?

If you agree for your child to take part in the study, your child's participation is voluntary and you are free to withdraw them at any time, without giving a reason. Your child is also free to withdraw themselves at any time, without giving a reason. Your child's information can be withdrawn until March 2025 when the group discussions will be analysed.

If my child takes part, what will my child be asked to do?

If you agree for your child to take part in the study, they will be asked for their assent to take part. If they agree to take part, they will be asked a question about their usual lunch choices (e.g. packed lunch, school meal, both). If your child took part in the first part of the CANTEEN study, we have already requested information on your child's age, gender, ethnicity, Special Educational Needs status and Free School Meal eligibility status from the school. If your child has not already taken part in the CANTEEN study, we will request this information about your child from the school. Your child will then be asked to join a group discussion that will be facilitated by the research team. The group discussion will include up to 8 pupils from the same school year and all discussions will be audio-recorded. We will ask your child for their full name for the purposes of linking their group discussion responses to some key information that we collect from the school. The group discussions will focus on school food and how pupils from different backgrounds or needs may think about and access school food differently. Pupils will also be asked about their thoughts on the school canteen, food education at school and food in general.

Researchers will visit your child's school to conduct the pupil group discussions. There will be at least one member of research staff (who has been background checked) who will facilitate the group discussion. A teacher will also be present during the group discussion. If your child does take part, they can choose to not answer any questions that they do not wish to answer. Your child will be given a £5 voucher as a thank you for their time spent taking part which will be distributed to them by the school after the group discussions have been completed.

What are the benefits and risks of my child taking part?

We are collecting information on food insecurity (not having enough money to buy food). There is a small possibility that collection of this data may be a sensitive issue for some pupils. Any concerns identified by the research team through your child's responses during the group discussions will be raised with your child's school who will deal with it in line with their established safeguarding procedures. The group discussions will take place during school hours and will be planned to cause the least possible disruption to classes.

By taking part in our research, you and your child can help further the development of UK policy relating to Free School Meals and help shape the health of future secondary school pupils.

What if there is a problem?

If you have any concerns about any aspects of the study, you can contact the Chief Investigator, Professor Jayne Woodside (Telephone 028 9097 8942; Email j.woodside@qub.ac.uk). Should you remain unhappy

and wish to make a formal complaint, you can contact the Research Governance Team at Queen's University Belfast (Telephone: 028 9097 2529; Email: researchgovernance@qub.ac.uk).

Will my child's taking part in the study be kept confidential?

Yes. Your child's information will be confidential, only the researchers will know what they have said. However, we will alert a teacher in your child's school if your child's answers to questionnaires indicate that they may benefit from support in relation to food security and wellbeing. Your child's school will follow their established safeguarding procedures in relation to this.

Researchers from Queen's University Belfast / University of Birmingham will audio record the group discussion using two digital recorders. The audio recordings will subsequently be uploaded and stored on a Queen's University Belfast / University of Birmingham secure computer server. The recordings will then be deleted from the digital recorder. The audio recordings will be used to type up transcripts of the group discussion and the typed transcripts will be stored on a Queen's University Belfast / University of Birmingham secure computer server. The audio-recordings will be processed by third parties (known as data processors), such as software and transcription companies. Contractual terms, policies and procedures will be put in place to ensure confidentiality is respected. Personal data (e.g. your child's name) will be stored in a password protected file, separate to other study data.

Electronic copies of the audio recordings will be destroyed when it has been satisfied that the transcript is an accurate written record of the interview. Only researchers working on the study as well as the software and transcription companies will have access to the electronic audio recordings and the typed transcripts. Electronic audio recordings and typed transcripts from this focus group will never be used online, or on social media. The first name of your child will be used during the audio recordings. When the audio recordings have been transcribed, first names will be replaced with a unique ID code. No other personal identifiers will accompany the audio recordings.

Only authorised members of the research team at Queen's University Belfast and the University of Birmingham will have access to your child's personal data. Their information in anonymised form (using ID numbers) may be shared with collaborating researcher institutions. In some instances, inspectors from regulatory authorities may need to access data for checking the quality of the research. Study documentation will be kept for 10 years from when the study has been completed to allow for full and final publication of the research results and will be held securely by the Chief Investigator. At the end of this period, data that are no longer required will be securely destroyed.

This research will be conducted in compliance with data protection legislation. For more information about how we look after your information, how to access your rights and who to contact if you have any queries or concerns about data protection please visit the Queen's University Belfast website - www.qub.ac.uk/privacynotice/Research/ListofResearchPrivacyNotices/PrivacyNoticeforResearchParticipants.html

What will happen to the results of the study?

A final report will be written at the end of the study and you will have the option of receiving a summary of this report. The results of the study will also be published in scientific journals and other reports for a variety of audiences and presented at scientific conferences and meetings. Neither you nor your child will be identifiable in any of these reports, publications and presentations. Other researchers may be given access to your child's data but only in anonymised form - they will not be able to link this data to your child.

Has this study been approved by an ethics committee?

Yes, this study has been approved by the School of Medicine, Dentistry and Biomedical Sciences Research Ethics Committee at Queen's University Belfast.

What if I have more questions or do not understand something?

You can contact the research team (contact details below) to discuss any questions or concerns you have.

Contact for Further Information:

CANTEEN Study, Centre for Public Health, School of Medicine Dentistry & Biomedical Sciences, Institute of Clinical Science Block A, Grosvenor Road, Belfast BT12 6BJ.

Email: canteenstudy@qub.ac.uk

Researcher contact for all schools in Northern Ireland:

Dr Désirée McIlwee, CANTEEN study Postdoctoral Research Fellow, Centre for Public Health, School of Medicine Dentistry and Biomedical Sciences, Queen's University Belfast, Institute of Clinical Science Block B, Grosvenor Road, Belfast BT12 6BJ.

Email: d.mcilwee@qub.ac.uk

Tel: 07823368446

Researcher contact for all schools in England:

Dr Emma Alving-Jessep, CANTEEN study Postdoctoral Research Fellow, Institute of Applied Health Research, College of Medical and Dental Sciences, The University of Birmingham, Murray Learning Centre, Edgbaston B15 2TT.

Email: e.alking-jessep@bham.ac.uk

Tel: 0121 414 8072

CANTEEN study Chief Investigator

Professor Jayne Woodside, Centre for Public Health, School of Medicine Dentistry and Biomedical Sciences, Queen's University Belfast, Institute of Clinical Science Block B, Grosvenor Road, Belfast BT12 6BJ.

E-mail: j.woodside@qub.ac.uk

Tel: 028 9097 8942

THANK YOU FOR CONSIDERING YOUR CHILDS PARTICIPATION IN THIS STUDY.

**PARENT OPT-OUT FORM
(1ST COPY FOR RETURN TO SCHOOL)**

Please only complete this if you DO NOT want your child to take part:

The CANTEEN Study: Free School Meals, Diet Quality and Food Insecurity in Secondary School Pupils: a Mixed Methods Study

I have read the information about the study.

Please initial the box below.

I am not willing for my child to take part in the case study.

Name of child:

School:

Class:

Signature of parent/guardian:

Date:

PLEASE RETURN THIS OPT-OUT FORM TO YOUR CHILD'S SCHOOL

PARENT OPT-OUT FORM

(2ND COPY FOR PARENT/CARER RECORDS)

Please only complete this if you **DO NOT want your child to take part:**

The CANTEEN Study: Free School Meals, Diet Quality and Food Insecurity in Secondary School Pupils: a Mixed Methods Study

I have read the information about the study.

Please initial the box below.

I am not willing for my child to take part in the case study.

Name of child:

School:

Class:

Signature of parent/guardian:

Date:

PLEASE KEEP THIS SECOND COPY OF THE OPT-OUT FORM FOR YOUR OWN RECORD