

## Research study about Salford Foundation's Steps Programme

### Information sheet for parents and carers



#### Summary of this document

- Steps is a classroom-based programme designed to help boys aged 11 to 14 to work on healthy relationships; respectful behaviour; online harms; and gender stereotypes. The [Youth Endowment Fund](#) (YEF) is funding a study of Steps.
- This sheet explains Steps, how it is being evaluated, and what it means for your child/ the child in your care<sup>1</sup>.
- Your child's school has agreed to take part in the Steps programme. The programme will be delivered to boys during the school day as part of their usual curriculum.
- **If you agree that your child can take part in the study, you do not need to do anything.** Steps will be part of normal school provision so written consent is not required, but you can withdraw your child by opting out. If you do not want your child to take part, please complete the opt-out form at the end of this document.
- If your child takes part, they will either be offered Steps for six weeks or they will continue with their usual lessons. Whether they receive Steps or not will be decided randomly – either your child's whole year group will be offered Steps or they will not. This is so that we can see if there are any differences based on the support boys receive.
- Your child will be **asked to fill in three short questionnaires** during school time about how they feel and their views. This will happen before Steps is delivered in the school, six weeks later, and then again roughly six months later. This is to see if there are any differences between the two groups.
- The information collected for your child will be used to write a report about the Steps programme. More information on how data is used in the study can be found in the **privacy notice** provided alongside this information sheet.
- If you do not want your child to take part in the study, he does not have to. If he does not take part in the study, Steps will not be available to him.
- This does not affect your child's access to their usual education, pastoral support, or any other services provided by the school.
- If you have any questions about anything to do with the study, you can contact the school or a member of the Salford Foundation team or the research team using the details on page 5.

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<sup>1</sup> We use the term 'your child' throughout this document. This includes carers who have a child in their care.

## What is Steps?

Steps is a six-week programme for groups of around 15 boys aged 11 to 14 (Years 7-9). Steps is designed to complement the Relationships, Health and Sex Education (RHSE) or Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) curriculum. It is delivered during the school day.



The [Salford Foundation](#), a Greater Manchester based charity, designed and deliver the Steps programme.

Sessions cover:

Gender stereotypes  
and misogyny

Online influences,  
algorithms and  
safety

Respect, healthy  
relationships and  
consent

Active bystander  
confidence (speaking  
up and seeking support)

## What is the research study?

The study is being funded by the [Youth Endowment Fund](#) (YEF). A group of researchers from an independent research organisation called Cordis Bright are leading the study. It aims to find out whether and how Steps helps boys in terms of healthy relationships; behaviour and well-being; and being safe online.

Contact details for the research team are available on page 5.

## Why am I being contacted about this?

Your child's school has agreed to take part in the Steps programme. The programme will be delivered to boys during the school day as part of their usual curriculum.

You are being contacted because your child's school is taking part in the research study of Steps.

Your child has not been selected for any specific individual reason other than that Steps will be running in the school.

## What will your child receive?

Steps will be delivered to whole year groups in Years 7-9. Different year groups will receive either:

- The Steps programme; or
- No changes to lessons.

This allocation happens at **year-group level**, not for individual boys, and is decided at random using a computer. This allows researchers to compare changes and differences between boys that may have been achieved by the Steps programme.

If your child receives Steps, this will usually take place during RHSE/RSE lessons. If this isn't possible, Steps will be delivered during a different lesson each week. This means they might miss one lesson on a one-off basis (for example, one maths lesson one week, art the next and science the following week).

## What happens if your child takes part?

If your child takes part even if they do not receive Steps, they will be asked to complete three short questionnaires about their attitudes and behaviours. They will complete these during the school day.

A trained member of the Salford Foundation team will be present to support your child to complete the questionnaire if needed.

Each questionnaire will take around 20-30 minutes to complete. They will complete the first questionnaire at the start of the study, the same questionnaire around six weeks later, and again around six months after this. This will help us to understand any changes over time.

As a thank you for taking part, any child who completes the third and final questionnaire will be entered into a prize draw to win one of five £25 Love2Shop vouchers.

We will also collect basic information from schools. Categories of personal information we will collect may include:

- First and last (family) name
- Unique Pupil Number (UPN)
- Date of birth
- Postcode
- Age
- School name
- School year group
- Sex assigned at birth
- Ethnicity (in line with ONS Guidance)
- Special Education Needs and Disabilities (SEND) status and description
- An Education, Health, and Care Plan (EHCP) status
- Looked After Children (LAC) status
- English as an Additional Language (EAL).

### How will we use the personal information we collect?

Data protection laws require us to have a valid reason to use your child's personal information. This is known as 'lawful basis'. For this study, we rely on the 'public task' lawful basis. This means that the study is carried out in the public interest to evaluate a publicly funded programme designed to support boys.

We will use the information that your child gives us to find out how well Steps has worked and to write reports about our findings.

The reports will not contain any personal information about your child and no one will be able to identify him from the reports. The reports will be published on the YEF's website and we might also use the reports on our website. We may also include findings from the reports in articles that we write or in presentations.

We may also use anonymised information from this study in future research about programmes that support boys. This may include comparing findings with other studies we have carried out, combining anonymised data sets, or carrying out further analyses such as looking at different groups or understanding how and why programmes work. These activities will only use anonymised data and your child will not be identifiable.

Any personal information that your child gives us will be stored securely on our server and kept confidential.

The only time we may share this personal information with another person or organisation is if your child says something that makes us concerned about them or about someone else. Our [Safeguarding Policy](#)<sup>2</sup> has more information about steps that we might take if this happens.

### **What happens to the information we collect after the study finished?**

After the study, the information will be sent to the [YEF Evaluation Data Archive](#)<sup>3</sup>, a safe place to store data from all YEF's studies that may be used in the future. The diagram on page 6 explains this. More information can also be found in the privacy notice provided along with this information sheet.

If you do not want your child's information to be included in the YEF Evaluation Data Archive, you can opt your child out of the study. However, if your child is opted out of the study they would not be able to receive Steps.

### **How do we keep your child and their information safe?**

All the information that your child shares with us will be confidential. Only Salford Foundation and members of the research team will be able to see the information.

If a boy becomes upset, needs support, or shares information that suggests he or someone else may be at risk, this will be handled in line with the school's safeguarding policy. This may involve sharing information with the school's safeguarding lead so that appropriate support can be offered.

Trained staff deliver Steps, and schools' usual safeguarding procedures remain in place at all times.

### **How long will the information be kept for?**

After we have sent the information to the YEF archive, we will take all names and other personal details out of the dataset held by Cordis Bright so no one will be able to know who took part in the study. We will keep the remaining information for 6 years after we have finished the report.

The YEF will keep information in the YEF archive for as long as it is needed for research purposes. This is allowed under data protection laws because it is in the public interest. The YEF will carry out a review every five years to see whether it is likely that the data will be used for future research and to see whether it still makes sense to keep the information in the archive.

### **Who has confirmed that this study is ethical?**

This project has been independently reviewed and given a favourable opinion by the University of Portsmouth Research Ethics Committee (UK). The University will have no further involvement in this study. The approval ID is: 25/ETHICS/018.

### **What if your child is upset by any of the questions asked?**

Occasionally, a boy may feel upset about the questions or issues that arise during the study.

If you or your child feels upset by any of the questions he is asked as part of the study, you should tell his Steps facilitator, Jade from the research team (see page 5) or Cordis Bright's safeguarding lead Kam Kaur at [kamkaur@cordisbright.co.uk](mailto:kamkaur@cordisbright.co.uk) (020 7330 9170).

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.cordisbright.co.uk/news/safeguarding-and-protecting-children-young-people-and-adults-at-risk>

<sup>3</sup> <https://youthendowmentfund.org.uk/evaluation-data-archive/>

If you or your child do not feel able to ask us for help, we encourage you to contact an external support service such as the [Samaritans](#) (Tel. 116 123) or [Childline](#) (Tel. 0800 1111).

### Does your child have to take part in the study?

If you do not want your child to take part in the study, he does not have to. It is a decision you may wish to take together.

We would like as many eligible boys as possible to improve our understanding about what makes a difference for them.

If you decide that you would not like your child to take part in the study, they will remain in their usual lessons. **Steps will not be available** to him.

### Can you change your mind?

You and your child can withdraw from the study at any time before it ends. You do not need to give a reason.

If you withdraw your child from the study he will not be asked to complete any more questionnaires. To withdraw from the study, please contact Jade, the study manager, using the details provided in the box at the end of this information sheet. You do not have to give a reason and your child will still be allowed to work with Steps if he has already started the programme.

If you change your mind, please tell us as soon as possible. Two weeks after completion of the third questionnaire (i.e. around 6 months after the first one), it may no longer be possible for the researchers to delete the information already collected from your child. This is because they will have used their information and those of other young people to carry out part of the study and to write a research report. If it is too late to delete the information already collected from your child, he can still withdraw from the rest of the study (that is, not answering any more questions) and from the YEF archive.

Once information goes to the YEF archive after February 2029, it can no longer be deleted because that would affect the quality of the archived data for use in the future research. See page 6 and the privacy notice accompanying this information sheet for more information about the YEF archive.

Once the study analysis has begun, it may not be possible to remove information already collected, as it will have been combined with data from many other children.

### What happens next?

If you are happy for your child to take part in the Steps programme and the research study, you do not have to do anything.

If you do not want your child to take part, please complete the opt-out form on page 7 and return it to your child's school.



### Feedback, queries and complaints

If you have any questions about the study, you can contact a member of the Salford Foundation, Cordis Bright team or the school – see contact details below.

If you have any feedback or questions about how we use personal information in this study, or if you want to make a complaint, you can contact Jade or Colin (see contact details below).

We always encourage you to speak to us first but if you remain unsatisfied, you also have the right to make a complaint at any time to the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO), the UK supervisory authority for data protection issues: <https://ico.org.uk/make-a-complaint/>

## Research Team Contact Details



**Study project manager:** Dr Jade Farrell

Email: [jadefarrell@cordisbright.co.uk](mailto:jadefarrell@cordisbright.co.uk)

Tel: 07749 418 891

**Data Protection Officer:** Colin Horswell

Email: [colinhorswell@cordisbright.co.uk](mailto:colinhorswell@cordisbright.co.uk)

Tel: 020 7330 9170

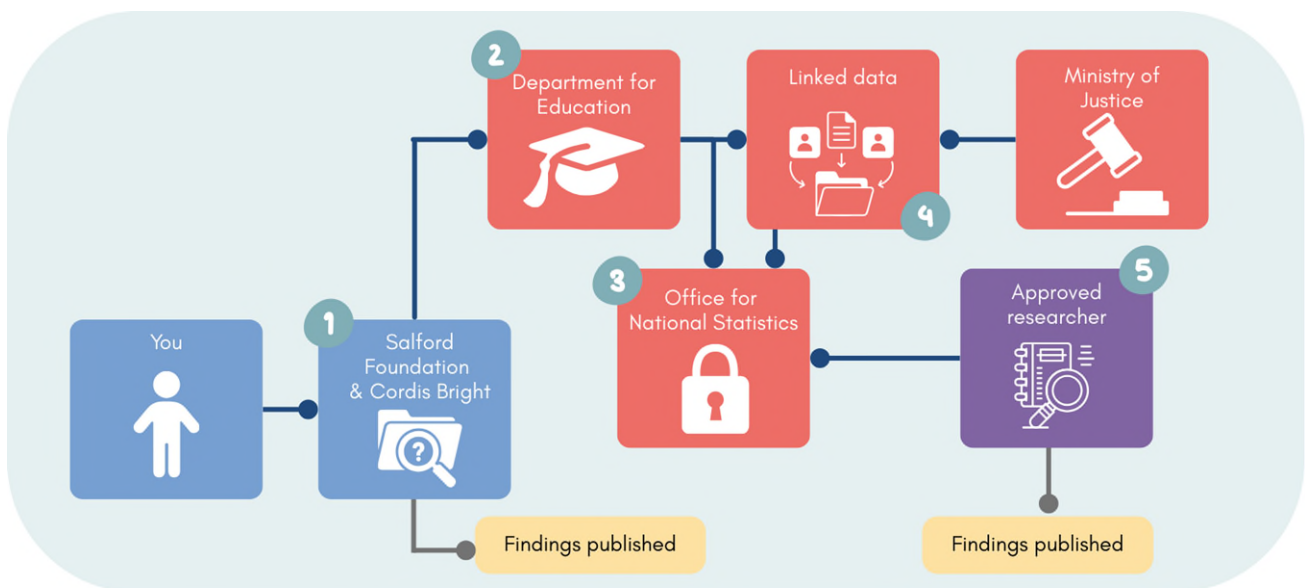


## The YEF data archive: What this means and how information will be used

All funded YEF projects include a data archive element. This means that some of the information collected as part of this study will be securely stored and used in future to help understand whether programmes like Steps make a difference for young people.

This is because right now, we don't know enough about the policies, programmes and approaches that successfully protect children. To make sure children get the best possible chances in life, we need to make sure they are getting the right support at the right time. To do that we need to gather evidence so that we can understand what works and what does not work. As part of this, YEF may re-use research data so that findings from studies like this one can contribute to better decision-making in the future.

Below summarises the secure approach we will follow to share this information:



1. Information is collected from your child and the other young people as part of the study to see if the support is helping them.
2. Personal information (like their name or date of birth) is removed from your child's records and he is assigned a unique identification number. After this, no one will be able to know who he is when looking at the information.
3. The information will then be held in a safe place called the YEF archive by the Office for National Statistics (ONS). No one can access it without approval.
4. The Department for Education and the Ministry of Justice will link together information on education and crime records that they hold. It will be possible to send information like this to the ONS to safely match to your child's information in the YEF archive.
5. Only approved researchers will be allowed to safely access your child's information to see if Steps helped people in the long term. Information in the archive cannot be used by law enforcement bodies or by the Home Office for immigration enforcement purposes.

Further details about the Youth Endowment Fund data archive, including how information is stored and accessed, are provided in the accompanying privacy notice.

## Research study about Salford Foundation's Steps Programme

### Parent/ carer opt-out form

Please **only complete this form if you would like to opt out of your child taking part** in the Steps programme and the research study.

**If you are happy for your child to take part, you do not have to do anything.**

#### Opt-out declaration:

I do not want my child / the child in my care to take part in the Steps programme and the research study.

Name of child (block capitals)	
Name of parent/ carer (block capitals)	
Signed (parent/ carer)	
Date	

**Please return this form to your child's school.**

**If we do not receive this form, your child will take part.**

Thank you!