**Forest school INterventions for Children’s Health (FINCH): a feasibility cluster randomised control trial**

**Interviews: Participant Information Sheet (Child Discussion Group)**

Version 1.0: 11 March 2025

**Introduction**

As you will be aware, your child’s school has been taking part in the FINCH study. Alongside your child receiving weekly Forest School sessions, and completing questionnaire data, we are also asking a small number of children involved in the study to take part in a small discussion group to discuss their experiences of taking part. We are interested in gathering views and opinions from a variety of children about the Forest School sessions that were delivered in their class, any preferences they had, how it made them feel, etc, and thoughts and opinions on the study processes (filling out the questionnaires, etc).

**Your child has been selected to take part in a discussion group with the research team**.

Before you decide whether you agree to your child taking part, it is important that you understand why the research is being done and what it would involve for your child. Please take the time to read the following information carefully. Please ask us (using the contact information in this letter) if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information which may help you decide whether you want to take part.

**What will your child have to do?**

We will explain the process to your child and check their understanding of what we are asking them to do by taking part discussion group. To indicate their understanding and to check that they are happy to take part in the interview, along with your consent, we will ask your child to complete an *assent form* before the interview commences. An assent form is a very simple consent form we use with children in research to ascertain that they agree to take part.

The discussion group will consist of 4-6 children and will take place **during school time** with two members of the research team, supported by a member of the school teaching staff. Weather depending, the interview will take place in the space that they have been enjoying their Forest School sessions. This will give the children the opportunity to show us some of the things that they have been involved with during the 12 weeks that they have been having the sessions. We will then ask the children some questions about the sessions. The discussion will last between **20-30 minutes**.

The discussion groupwill be **audio recorded**. This recording will be transcribed into written text and any reference to names, or other identifying information will be removed at this point. The audio recordings will be permanently destroyed after this process.

Your child does not have to answer any questions that they do not want to, participant as much or as little as they wish, and they can choose to return to their class at any point if they do not wish to continue participating in the discussion.

**Does my child have to take part?**

You do not have to consent for your child to take part if you do not wish to do so. **If you are happy for your child to take part in an interview, please complete both copies of the attached consent form by agreeing to each of the statements with your initials and providing your signature. Please retain one copy for yourself and return the other copy back to your child’s class teacher**. If you do not want your child/children to take part in an interview, please let your child’s school teacher know as soon as possible. This will mean the research team is able to invite another child to complete an interview.

Additionally, if you agree for your child to take part and later change your mind, you have the right to withdraw up until the discussion group takes place without providing a reason. You cannot withdraw your child once the discussion group has taken place as it will not be possible to identify individual children or their responses from the transcripts, and their data will still be used in the analysis.

**What are the possible benefits and risks of taking part?**

Their contributions will help us understand how the children viewed and engaged with the forest school sessions and this will help us improve our knowledge around how Forest Schools may ‘work’ in the school context, and how acceptable conducting research is in this context. This will really help with planning future research in this field.

We do not think that there will be any risks of your child taking part. There will be a member of the teaching staff present with us at all times. Additionally, your child can ask to leave the discussion group at any time, participate as much or as little as they wish, and they do not have to answer any questions they don’t want to.

**Will my child taking part be kept confidential?**

We will not make reference to your child’s name or anything that would make them personally identifiable in any outputs from the study, and all data in any publications will be anonymised. Their data will be stored safely in a password-protected folder at the University of York and will only be accessible by the research team. The University of York and its data storage procedures are fully compliant with General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)

**What are my choices about how my child’s information is used?**

You and your child can stop being part of the study at any time, without giving a reason, but we will keep information about you that we already have. The University of York is a publicly funded organisation that conducts research in the public interest to improve health and healthcare services. The ability to change the data that we have collected, however, is limited, as we need to manage your information in specific ways in order for the research to be reliable and accurate. To find out more about the use of your data in this study, please visit the following websites:

* <https://www.york.ac.uk/records-management/dp/>
* <https://www.york.ac.uk/records-management/dp/guidance/gdprcompliantresearch/>
* <https://www.york.ac.uk/records-management/dp/your-info/generalprivacynotice/>
* <https://www.york.ac.uk/healthsciences/research/trials/trials-gdpr/research-partcipants/>

You can also email the University of York’s data protection officer at: dataprotection@york.ac.uk. Please let a member of the research team know if you need assistance with this.

**What will happen when the study ends?**

The anonymised data will be stored securely at the University of York and then destroyed after 10 years.

**What will happen to the results of the study?**

The results of the study will be published in a final report. A peer-reviewed article may also be prepared for publication in an academic journal. You will be sent a summary of the study findings unless you request for us not to do so (please email us if you do not wish to be contacted).

**What will happen if I don’t want my child to carry on being part of the study?**

Participation is entirely voluntary. Declining to participate will not affect you or your child in any way. If you do agree for your child to participate, you and they are able to withdraw this consent at any time up until the discussion group takes place, and there will be no consequence of doing this. You have the right to withdraw from the study completely and decline any further contact by study staff after you withdraw. If you withdraw from the study after the discussion group has taken place, we will need to keep and use the data collected as it will not be possible to identify individual children or their responses from the transcripts, and their data will still be used in the analysis.

**Who has reviewed the study?**

This study has been reviewed and given favourable opinion by the University of York’s Department of Environment and Geography Ethical Review Committee . The Committee’s approval was given on **<insert date>**, Reference number: **<insert reference number>**

**Who should I contact if I wish to make a complaint?**

If you have a concern about any aspect of this study, you should ask to speak to a member of the research team who will do their best to answer your questions:

Dr Hannah Armitt Professor Peter Coventry

Email: [Hannah.armitt@nhs.net](mailto:Hannah.armitt@nhs.net) Email: [Peter.coventry@york.ac.uk](mailto:Peter.coventry@york.ac.uk)

If you are unhappy with the way your personal data has been handled, you have a right to complain to the University’s Data Protection Officer at [dataprotection@york.ac.uk](mailto:dataprotection@york.ac.uk).

**Thank you for taking the time to read this Participant Information Sheet.**

**Please complete both copies of the consent form if you consent for your child to take part in the interview. Please retain a copy for your own records and return the other copy to your child’s class teacher.**

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# Interview Consent Form (Parental/carer consent for child interview)

Version 1.0: 29 November 2024

**Please read the following statements and write your initials in each box if you agree with the statement.**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Participant ID (Child):** | | **Initials** |
| **1** | I confirm that I have read the Participant Information Sheet dated **11 March 2025 (Version 1.0)** |  |
| **2** | I confirm that I have had the opportunity to ask questions, discuss the discussion group process and have received satisfactory answers. |  |
| **3** | I confirm that I have enough information about the study and understand what the discussion group involves for my child. |  |
| **4** | I understand that my child’s participation is voluntary and that they are free to leave the discussion group, without giving any reason. Should my child withdraw, the information collected so far cannot be deleted and that this information may be used in the analysis. |  |
| **5** | I give permission for the study research group to collect, store, analyse and publish information obtained from my child’s participation in the discussion group. I understand that my child’s personal details will be kept confidential. |  |
| **6** | I understand that the research team will store my personal details to contact me about my child’s participation in the discussion group. I give my permission for this information to be kept so I can be contacted if required. |  |
| **7** | I understand that the anonymised information collected about my child may be used to support other research in the future and may be shared with other researchers. |  |
| **8** | I give permission for the discussion group to be recorded. I am aware that the recording will be permanently destroyed after the transcription process and that during the transcription all identifiable information (e.g., names) will be removed. |  |
| **9** | I am aware that anonymised quotes may be extracted from the transcriptions and reported in study outputs. I understand that no identifying information will be linked with any quotes used. |  |
| **10** | I am aware that all information my child shares will be treated in confidence. In the unlikely event any information is shared which poses a significant risk to health/life the relevant authorities will be informed in collaboration with the individual in question. |  |
| **11** | My child is happy to take part in the interview. |  |
| **12** | **I agree to the above statements, and I agree for my child to take part in the study.** |  |

**Parent Name:**

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**Parent Signature:**

\_ \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ \_

**Child’s Name**

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

**Child’s School**

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

**Date:**

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