

Evaluation of the parental engagement project

Submission date 24/07/2015	Recruitment status No longer recruiting	<input type="checkbox"/> Prospectively registered <input type="checkbox"/> Protocol
Registration date 10/08/2015	Overall study status Completed	<input type="checkbox"/> Statistical analysis plan <input type="checkbox"/> Results
Last Edited 30/01/2019	Condition category Other	<input type="checkbox"/> Individual participant data <input type="checkbox"/> Record updated in last year

Plain English summary of protocol

Background and study aims

Despite the established link between parents being engaged with their child's learning and educational achievement, it is still necessary to understand and identify what parents want and need in order to help them to better engage and participate in their children's learning experiences. This remains a challenge for schools, particularly when involving parents who have chosen not to engage with their child's learning. Recent technological advances have opened up new ways for schools to communicate with parents and Information Communications Technology (ICT) provides a convenient means for schools to send - and parents to access - up-to-date information about their child's learning and the curriculum. It is with this in mind that the current intervention seeks to promote the engagement of parents in their child's learning through the creative use of text messages from the school, which are intended to inform parents about various aspects of their child's attendance, learning and progress. The aim of this study is to find out how the intervention affects how well secondary school students do in their examinations and how well parents engage with their child's learning.

The research questions are:

1. What is the impact of the intervention on how well children do in literacy, maths and science examinations, their school attendance and how much their parents become involved in their learning.
2. Does the effect of the intervention vary between students according to the stage at which they are studying (Key Stage 3 or 4), gender, background, how well they were doing before the start of the study and the size of the school.
3. Was the intervention delivered with fidelity, and what were the successes and challenges associated with implementation?

Who can participate?

Pupils in years 7, 9 and 11 in participating schools that are willing to take part.

What does the study involve?

All schools participating in this trial have a control and intervention group. Within each school, one Key Stage group is randomly allocated to the intervention condition. The intervention group receives the intervention for three school terms (one academic year). This involves a communication strategy where text messages are sent to parents at specific times during the school year containing information relating to their child's attendance, performance and upcoming tests and assignments. The other Key Stage group is assigned as the control condition.

where no additional information is sent home to parents and it is very much business as usual (communication via letters home, telephone calls etc). Schools delivering the intervention to their KS3 students includes Year 7 and Year 9 only, whereas schools delivering the intervention to their KS4 includes Year 11 only. All children are then tested at the end of the study regardless of what group/arm they are in. To ensure that the programme is delivered appropriately, a research assistant from the Bristol/Harvard University team supports each participating school

What are the possible benefits and risks of participating?

A risk analysis of School of Education and CEE activity has been undertaken. This adds security to the funding body and peace of mind that the proposal will be delivered on specification and on time.

There are no risks to students participating in this study.

Where is the study run from?

The evaluation is being led by the Centre for Effective Education, Queen's University Belfast. Harvard University and University of Bristol designed the intervention and managed the programme delivery.

When is the study starting and how long is it expected to run for?

January 2014 to February 2016

Who is funding the study?

Education Endowment Foundation (UK)

Who is the main contact?

Dr Sarah Miller

Contact information

Type(s)

Public

Contact name

Dr Sarah Miller

ORCID ID

<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-7598-8661>

Contact details

20 College Green

School of Education

Queen's University Belfast

Belfast

United Kingdom

BT7 1HL

Additional identifiers

Study information

Scientific Title

Engaging parents through text messaging

Acronym

PEP

Study objectives

To determine the impact of the final intervention on the academic outcomes of secondary school students and the engagement behaviour of parents in participating schools.

Ethics approval required

Old ethics approval format

Ethics approval(s)

School of Education Research Ethical Committee at Queen's University Belfast, 30/04/2014

Study design

Cluster randomized controlled trial

Primary study design

Interventional

Study type(s)

Other

Health condition(s) or problem(s) studied

Educational attainment.

Interventions

30 schools have been involved in this trial, and all schools have a control and intervention group (a 2-arm cRCT). Schools were randomised to each arm by key stage group, i.e. key stage 3 or key stage 4. The intervention ran from September 2014 to July 2015 where text messages are sent to parents at specific time points and intervals during the school year containing information relating to their child's attendance, performance and upcoming tests and assignments. Those in the control group did not receive any additional information sent home to parents, it was very much business as usual (communication via letters home, telephone calls etc). All children have been tested at study-end regardless of what group/arm they have been in.

Intervention Type

Behavioural

Primary outcome(s)

1. Student achievement in English, Maths and Science (Key Stage 3). Assessed in May/June 2015
2. Student achievement in GCSE English, Maths and Science (Key Stage 4). Assessed in June 2015

Key secondary outcome(s)

School attendance and parental behaviour and attitudes:

1. School attendance for each student (from September 2014-July 2015) will be collected directly from the school. The previous years' (2013-2014) attendance will be used as a baseline for this outcome.

2. Parental behaviour and attitudes: measured via telephone interviews at post-test (June 2015) that collected background demographic information and data relating to aspects of the home learning environment, parental involvement in their child's education and school, and; aspirations for their child's education and future employment. No baseline data was collected on these parent related outcomes.

Completion date

28/02/2016

Eligibility

Key inclusion criteria

Pupils in years 7, 9 and 11 who are willing to participate.

Participant type(s)

Other

Healthy volunteers allowed

No

Age group

Child

Sex

All

Key exclusion criteria

No exclusion criteria.

Date of first enrolment

01/02/2014

Date of final enrolment

30/06/2014

Locations

Countries of recruitment

United Kingdom

Northern Ireland

Study participating centre

Centre for Effective Education

Queen's University Belfast

Belfast

United Kingdom

BT7 1NN

Sponsor information

Organisation

Education Endowment Foundation

ROR

<https://ror.org/03bhd6288>

Funder(s)

Funder type

Charity

Funder Name

Education Endowment Foundation

Results and Publications

Individual participant data (IPD) sharing plan

IPD sharing plan summary

Stored in repository

Study outputs

Output type	Details	Date created	Date added	Peer reviewed?	Patient-facing?
Study website	Study website	11/11/2025	11/11/2025	No	Yes