



School of Science & Technology
University of New England
Armidale NSW 2351
Australia

Phone 02 6773 2596

Csharp13@une.edu.au
www.une.edu.au/

INFORMATION SHEET
for
PARENTS and Children
aged 16 and 17 years.

We wish to invite you to participate in a research project being conducted by the University of New England and the NSW Dept of Family & Community Services.

NB: This Consent Form is for ALL Parents and for their Children aged 16 and 17 years. There is an additional Assent Form for Children aged 10 to 15 years.

Research Project

The effect of an Information Technology (IT) Social Club upon well-being and social communication in Children and teenagers aged 10 to 17 years with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)

Aim of the research

The research aims to explore the effects of an IT Club experience for adolescents with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD).

IT Club at UNE

We are asking for you to give permission for yourself or your child to participate in the ASD IT Club at UNE, and for him/her to complete some interviews for us.

The ASD IT Club is a series of 8 2-hour IT sessions at UNE, run over 8 weeks, under the supervision of a qualified child behaviour management specialist and during which your child will be encouraged to engage in graded IT exploration activities that have been developed by members of the UNE IT staff (Dr Greg Falzon and James Bishop). Each child will be allowed to explore the activities at their own pace, and no exams or other tests on IT will be conducted. If you are a parent, you will be welcome to sit in on the IT Club sessions if you wish, or to wait elsewhere while the Club is in progress.

Interview

If you and your child agree, we would like to conduct some interviews with you and your child before the first IT session and after the last IT session. These interviews would be conducted by Ms Kim Sarmukadam, a behaviour management specialist in ASD who is employed by UNE.

We would like to conduct the interviews with you at UNE. The interview will take approximately 30 minutes and the interviewer will make some notes but will not record the

interview.

The interviews with your child will be conducted at UNE, notes will be taken but no recordings will be made. These interviews will also take about 30 minutes.

Confidentiality

Any information or personal details gathered in the course of the study will remain confidential. No individual will be identified by name in any publication of the results. All names will be replaced by pseudonyms; this will ensure that you are not identifiable.

Participation is Voluntary

Please understand that your involvement in this study is voluntary and we respect your right to withdraw from the study at any time. You may discontinue the interview at any time without consequence and you do not need to provide any explanation if you decide not to participate or withdraw.

Questions

The interview questions will be about some aspects of your child's knowledge of IT and how they feel about themselves and their relationships with others. Please take a look at the interview questions for your child and yourself and tell us if you agree that we may ask them these questions.

Use of information

The information will be used to inform FACS about the benefits of IT Clubs for young people with ASD. Information from the interview may also be used in journal articles and conference presentations before and after this date. At all times, we will safeguard your identity by presenting the information in a way that will not allow any person to be identified.

Upsetting issues

It is unlikely that this research will raise any personal or upsetting issues but if it does you may wish to contact the Armidale Community Health Centre ((02) 6776 9801) or Lifeline on 13 11 14.

Storage of information

We will keep hardcopy notes of the interviews in a locked cabinet at the researcher's office at the University of New England's School of Science & Technology. The Consent Forms and the de-identified raw data will be stored on Professor Sharpley's PC at UNE, under password. Identifiable raw data will be stored in a locked filing cabinet in his office at UNE. Any electronic data will be kept on a password protected computer in the same School. Only the research team will have access to the data.

Disposal of information

We have no current plan to dispose of the data from this study. All information will be securely stored as per the paragraph above this one.

Approval

This project has been approved by the Human Research Ethics Committee of the University of New England (Approval No. HE16-127, valid to 9/09/2017).

Contact details

Feel free to contact us with any questions about this research by email at csharp13@une.edu.au, 02 6773 2596; vbitsika@bond.edu.au, 07 5595 4142; ksarmuk2@une.edu.au, 02 6773 4399; michelle.owens@fac.s.nsw.gov.au, 02 67730300.

Complaints

Should you have any complaints concerning the manner in which this research is conducted, please contact the Research Ethics Officer at:

Mrs Jo-Ann Sozou
Research Services
University of New England
Armidale, NSW 2351
Tel: (02) 6773 3449
Email: ethics@une.edu.au

Thank you for considering this request and I look forward to further contact with you.

Regards,

Prof Chris Sharpley, Prof Vicki Bitsika, Ms Kimaya Sarmukadam
& Ms Michelle Owens



Science & Technology
University of New England
Armidale NSW 2351
Australia

Phone 02 6773 2596

Csharp13@une.edu.au
www.une.edu.au/

Information Sheet for Children aged 10 to 15 years

The effect of an Information Technology (IT) Social Club upon well-being and social communication in Children and teenagers aged 10 to 17 years with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD).

Dear Student,

We wish to invite you to participate in a research project at UNE about the experiences of young people with Autism Spectrum Disorder during an IT Club.

This Information Sheet has the answers to many of the questions that you and your parent(s) may have about the study. There is a lot of information in here so don't worry if it is too much for one read. Just read through a bit at a time if you want.

1) What is the study for and why is it being done

We hope that by doing this study, we will learn more about how young people with ASD experience IT and how it makes them feel. This information will help to plan IT experiences for young people like you.



2) What would I be asked to do if I took part in the study?

We want you to be interviewed by one of our staff, then attend the weekly 2-hour sessions of the IT Club for 8 weeks (or as many weeks as you wish to attend) and then be interviewed again. The interviews will be very relaxed and informal and you don't have to talk about anything that you don't want to. There will be no tests about IT and you won't be graded on IT or anything else. The major aim of the IT Club is for you to enjoy yourself doing things in IT that you like. We have set up some IT exercises for you to progress through at your own pace. We think that you will find these exercises enjoyable and that you will learn some more about IT by doing them.

3) Will my parents have to do anything?

Apart from making sure you are happy to participate in this research project, your parents will be asked to also be interviewed before and after the IT Club starts and finishes.

4) When and where would the IT Club sessions and interview take place?

Each IT Club session will be run in a room at UNE. The interviews with you will also be run at UNE. The IT Club sessions will run once each week for 8 weeks and will be of about 2 hours each, but you can leave earlier if you want to.

5) What information will the researchers want me to tell them?

We want you to tell us all about your thoughts and feelings about IT and about how you feel about yourself and about others.

6) What will be done with this information that I give?

We will make tables of the interview information we collect and then write a report about the project. No-one's real names will be used in the report so that no-one can identify who was in the IT Club. The information we collect will be used to plan more IT Clubs.

We will also write articles about the study and publish these and also talk about the study at meetings and conferences so that what we have found out actually gets to people who might be able to use the information to help. If we didn't do this, then the young people who helped us might feel that they had done this for nothing. However, in any of the articles or reports, your name will not appear as what you tell us is confidential and private.



7) Who will be told about any information that I give?

Each of the interviews is strictly confidential. What you tell us will stay within the research team, apart from when we report the study as we explained above in point (6). None of what you tell us will become part of any school records or notes. All information remains confidential.

8) Do I have to take part in this project?

Not at all. You should only take part if you want to.

9) What will happen if I don't want to take part?

Nothing at all. You have every right to say that you would rather not take part.

10) Can I change my mind if I decide to participate?

Yes. You can choose to leave the project at any time and nothing at all will be said, apart from 'Thank you very much for thinking about taking part'. You can also choose to discuss or not discuss any aspect of your experience - whatever you feel most comfy with.

11) Will the study benefit me in any way?

We can't promise that you will get any benefit from taking part but we hope that you will enjoy learning more about IT and from doing the exercises in the IT Club.

12) Have you got permission to do this study?

Yes. We have permission from the Ethics Committee at the Human Research Ethics Committee of the University of New England. They have looked carefully at this study and have 'passed' it.



13) What if I have other questions about the study?

Please contact the Research Assistant Ms Kim Sarmukadam at any time. Her office phone number is 02 6773 4399. You can also call Professor Christopher Sharpley (02 6773 2596) or Professor Vicki Bitsika (07 55954142).

If you have any complaints about the way this research is conducted, please contact the Research Ethics Officer at the following address:

Research Services
University of New England
Armidale, NSW 2351.
Telephone: (02) 6773 3449 Facsimile (02) 6773 3543
Email: ethics@une.edu.au



15) What if I feel that I would like to talk to someone after the interview about any thoughts, feelings or problems that I have?

You may contact any member of the research team, or you may prefer to speak with your classroom teacher or parents.

16) The formal 'stuff':

This project has been approved by the Ethics Committee at the University of New England (Approval No. HE16-127, valid to 9/09/2017).

Please keep this information sheet as you might want to discuss it with friends, family or relatives.

Thanks a lot for taking the time to read this and for any help that you are able to give us with this project.

Regards,

Prof Chris Sharpley, Prof Vicki Bitsika, Ms Kimaya Sarmukadam & Ms Michelle Owens