

iCATS-i2i Team

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Oxford Health
NHS Foundation Trust

iCATS-i2i

identifying Child Anxiety Through Schools-Identification to Intervention Feasibility study

INFORMATION SHEET FOR HEADTEACHERS AND SCHOOL STAFF

(ETHICS REFERENCE: R71772/RE001)

An invitation to your school

We would like to invite your school to take part in a research project called iCATS-i2i.

What is iCATS-i2i?

iCATS-i2i stands for 'identifying Child Anxiety Through Schools-identification to intervention'. This is a research project, funded by the National Institute for Health Research (NIHR). We have worked with parents, children, school staff and others to develop a new way of identifying and supporting children with anxiety problems through schools.

It involves 1) children, parents and teachers/support staff completing short questionnaires about children's anxiety, 2) the study team giving feedback to parents, and 3) where a child is experiencing anxiety problems, the study team offering parents a brief online intervention, with telephone support from therapists. The parents of children who are not likely to experience anxiety problems are given information and guidance about supporting child anxiety in case this may still be helpful.

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WP3 School and staff information sheet – V1.

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In this project we want to try out this new way of identifying and supporting children with anxiety problems in a small number of schools, and get feedback from children, parents, school staff and others so that we can make sure it works for everyone involved.

Why do we need a new way of identifying and supporting children with anxiety problems?

Anxiety problems are common in children. Fears, worries and anxiety are a normal part of childhood, but for some children anxiety has a negative impact on their day-to-day lives.

These children may benefit from support or intervention to help them manage and overcome their difficulties with anxiety.

But many children who experience anxiety problems don't receive professional support. One reason for this is that it can be hard to identify anxiety problems in children and make judgements about whether a child may benefit from support or not. Where anxiety problems are identified, families also often face difficulties knowing where and how to access effective support.

Why has your school been chosen?

We are inviting mainstream primary and junior schools in England to take part. We are looking for schools with two classes of **year 4 pupils**. If your school has more than two classes of year 4 pupils, we will talk to you about which two classes can take part in the project.

What will we be doing and how will your school be involved?

iCATS Lead

We will ask you to nominate a member of school staff who can act as the 'iCATS lead' within the school, and be the primary point of contact for the research team when liaising with the school. **The iCATS lead may or may not wish to employ the help of other members of staff to assist with specific activities, but will be responsible for overseeing the project within the school.**

1. School Consent

We will ask the school headteacher if they agree to your school participating in the research project. If the headteacher agrees, we will ask them to complete a school consent form electronically or on paper.

2. Information for teachers and children

We will also ask headteachers to share this information with the class teachers for **year 4 classes** in your school.

We have developed materials for an information session for school staff and an 'iCATS assembly' for children. An iCATS Researcher will run these sessions with the iCATS School Lead or another relevant member of staff (or school staff can use the materials to run these sessions themselves if preferred).

3. Information parents and parent/carer opt-out

We will ask your school to distribute **information leaflets and opt-out forms to all parents/carers of children in participating year 4 classes**. We have also developed materials for an information session for parents which we will run with the school iCATS Lead (or school staff can use the materials to run this themselves if they prefer).

We will provide an electronic version of the parent information leaflet to include as a link in a newsletter, on your school website and/or to send via email or SMS. We will also provide paper copies of the information leaflet and opt-out forms for you to distribute to parents. We will ask parents to return opt-out forms to school within an agreed timeframe (approximately 1-2 weeks) and we will ask school staff to keep returned opt-out forms safe and to keep a record of children whose parents opt-out.

We are keen for as many families as possible to take part – including children who have problems with anxiety, children who are not anxious and those in between. We also want to make sure the information about the study reaches all parents and they have an opportunity to let us know if they do not want their child to take part. We will talk to you about other things we can do to help encourage families to get involved with the research project and also to make sure parents have the opportunity to opt out.

4. Initial Questionnaires

We will ask for the iCATS Lead in your school to help with distributing questionnaires to children, class teachers/support staff and parents/carers

Children

If parents do not opt-out and children agree to take part, children will be asked to complete an assent form, a short questionnaire about their anxiety and some other short questionnaires about their health, feelings and behaviours. Where possible, iCATS Researchers will visit your school to work with children to complete the questionnaires as part of a lesson (unless school staff prefer to administer questionnaires themselves). The questionnaires will take approximately 30 minutes to complete. We will also provide materials for an alternative activity (e.g. a colouring-in activity) for children whose parents opt-out and those who choose themselves not to take part.

We will also provide materials for a lesson on recognising and managing anxiety which we can deliver after children complete the initial questionnaires, or school staff can deliver themselves if they prefer.

Where children cannot complete questionnaires at school, or where children choose to complete the questionnaires at home, we will provide you with the assent forms and questionnaires for children to complete at home (on paper or online). We will ask you to keep any returned paper questionnaires safe until we collect them.

Year 4 Class teacher/support staff

We will also ask class teachers/support staff who work regularly with children to complete a short questionnaire about participating children. This should take approximately 4-5 minutes

per child and can be done online or on paper copies. We will also ask class teachers/support staff to provide some demographic information about themselves (age, gender, ethnicity, role, and where applicable, number of years teaching).

Parents/carers

Parents/carers will be asked to complete a short questionnaire about their child's anxiety, and to provide some background information about their family, either online or on paper. We will also ask parents to answer additional questions about their child's health, feelings and behaviours and about their child's use of services and their own health. We will also provide parents with a diary to keep a record of any services or support their child receives during the project.

Additional information

We will ask schools to provide some demographic and learning information about participating children from the school records.

We will also provide the iCATS Lead and Year 4 class teachers with a log to record time spent on any iCATS activities throughout the project.

5. Feedback for parents

We will provide all parents with written feedback, and in some cases feedback by telephone. Where parents complete the initial questionnaires, the feedback will let them know whether questionnaire responses indicate their child maybe experiencing problems with anxiety or does not seem to be experiencing problems with anxiety. We will also provide you with information and guidance on providing additional feedback to families, and where we do not have parents' contact details, we will ask for your help distributing the written feedback to parents.

Where parents provide consent, we will let the iCATS Lead know whether responses indicate a child is experiencing problems with anxiety, or does not seem to be experiencing problems with anxiety.

6. Intervention for some parents

Where questionnaire responses indicate that a child is experiencing problems with anxiety, parents will be invited to take part in a short online intervention. We will also make the intervention available to all families who feel they may benefit, even if questionnaire responses do not indicate the child is experiencing problems with anxiety. Parents/carers will have an opportunity to talk to researchers and/or school staff about the intervention. However, schools will not be informed by the research team whether or not parents take up the intervention.

The online intervention is based on an established face-to-face intervention, and involves working directly with parents to help them develop strategies to support their child. Parents/carers work through a series of 7 modules, and modules 'unlock' as the parent progresses, with questionnaires built into each module. Each module is supported by a brief telephone session with a therapist (approximately 15 minutes) once a week for 7 weeks, and a follow-up telephone session 4-weeks later. There is also an accompanying app for the

child that is a game for mobile devices designed to help motivate the child to face their fears.

7. Follow-up questionnaires and information

We will ask for your help distributing questionnaires again to children, class teachers/support staff and parents/carers to complete about participating children.

These questionnaires will be similar to the initial questionnaires.

We will also ask schools to provide some information about participating children from the school records again.

8. Feedback from parents/carers, children and school staff

We will ask you to distribute information about follow-up interviews and discussion groups to all parents/carers of children in participating Year 4 classes, school staff and others involved in the school (e.g. governors, mental health service providers working in the school). These interviews and discussion groups will help us to collect feedback on the project and make improvements.

In-depth interviews and discussion groups

We will also organise one-to-one interviews with parents/carers, children, school staff and others who are involved with the school and may have a view on the project (approximately 6 interviews per group). We will talk to you about arranging convenient times to run these at school, if possible or by telephone or video-call. Each will last about an hour.

We may also organise discussion groups for parents/carers, children, and school staff each with up to 6 participants. We will talk to you about arranging convenient times to run these at school, if possible. Each will last about an hour. For parents/carers, we will organise two separate groups, one for those who were not offered the intervention, and one for those who were offered the intervention.

The interviews and discussion groups will allow us to collect more detailed information about individuals' experiences related to completing questionnaires, receiving/giving feedback, and where appropriate taking part in the intervention. We will audio-record the sessions to make sure we capture all of the discussion.

Do your school and school staff have to take part?

No, your school and school staff do not have to take part.

If your school does decide to take part, the headteacher will be asked to sign a consent form to agree to the school taking part. If the headteacher later changes their mind, they are free to withdraw your school's involvement at any time without having to give a reason.

School staff who agree to complete questionnaires about participating children and/or take part in an interview or discussion group will also be free to withdraw from the study at any time without giving a reason. They will be able to choose to withdraw some or all of the data they provide on themselves and/or participating children, but if they want to do this, they will need to let the iCATS-i2i team know before the end of the project.

To say thank you

To reimburse families and teachers for their time, we will offer:

- Families a **£10 gift voucher** after completing the initial child and parent questionnaires, and **another £10 gift voucher** after completing the follow-up child and parent questionnaires
- Schools **£200** at the end of the project, after all data collection is complete
- Each participant who takes part in an interview or discussion group a **£10** gift voucher.

What are the possible advantages and disadvantages of taking part?

Possible advantages:

- Your school will be part of a high profile research project to help improve access to effective support for children who experience problems with anxiety.
- We will provide you with materials for a lesson for Year 4 children on recognising and managing anxiety which you can use or we can deliver for you, after children complete the initial questionnaires
- Where questionnaire responses indicate that a child may experience difficulties with anxiety, parents/carers will be offered a brief intervention to help equip them with strategies to support their child
- Once the project is complete, we will provide you with a project report. The report will show how your school compares to other schools on questionnaires responses. You will be free to use and share this report as you wish, e.g. to help inform school-wide mental health policy and practice, to share with OFSTED. We will also provide schools with information on resources available for families and school staff to support children with anxiety problems.

Possible disadvantages:

Children, parents/carers, and school staff will need to spend some time completing questionnaires, and school staff may need to spend some time providing parents with feedback. The iCATS School Lead will also need to spend some time helping the iCATS Researchers to co-ordinate the various activities and other school staff (e.g. admin staff) may need to help with providing information about participating children from the school records. Some parents, children and school staff will also spend some time taking part in interview and/or discussion groups. We will talk to you about how to minimise any inconvenience for staff and families.

We work with families to try to make sure the questions we ask on questionnaires, in interviews and discussion groups and as part of the intervention are as acceptable as possible. But some of the questions we ask children and parents, and areas that are addressed in the intervention may involve discussing thoughts and feelings that may be upsetting. It is also possible that we may identify children who are experiencing mental health difficulties for whom a brief anxiety intervention may not be suitable. We will provide these families with information about self-help resources and signposting to access services and support.

What happens to the information we collect?

- All information we collect in this research about your school, school staff, children and parents/carers will be kept secure and in confidence. We have attached a Privacy Notice that provides more detailed information about how we keep information about participants safe.
- All participants and schools will be assigned unique IDs that do not include participant or school names. We will use these IDs to label all information we collect about participants and schools. We will store a document that links the IDs to participants and schools separately from all other research data.
- Audio-recording will be stored temporarily on audio-recorders, and once transferred to a secure server, will be permanently deleted from recording devices. Audio-recordings of discussion groups and interviews will be transcribed, and any information that could identify schools or participants will be removed. We will use an external transcriber who has been approved to work with the University of Oxford and has signed a confidentiality agreement.
- Data collected from parents/carers and school staff online will use a secure website, with end-to-end encryption, and data will be held on a secure server. Information collected on paper will temporarily be stored in locked filing cabinets at the University of Oxford, and destroyed once transferred to a secure server.
- We will not share information we collect from parents/carers, children or school staff with you or anyone else, unless we have parent/carer permission. The only circumstances where we would share information without permission is if we thought that a child or someone else was at serious risk of harm. In these circumstances, we would only share information essential to ensure safety and any information sharing would be in accordance with the iCATS-i2i risk and safeguarding protocol. We will ask you to let us know who the Safeguarding Lead is in your school, and where possible we will contact them in the first instance about any risk or safety concerns and information sharing.
- We will not routinely share copies of questionnaires that class teachers/support staff complete about participating children with parents/carers. However, if a parent/carer requested a copy of the questionnaire, we would be obliged to share this with them.
- Once the research project is finished, we may release the project data for other researchers to use, but only in a way that it is impossible for them to identify who has taken part. Any data or findings from the research that is published will not identify schools or individuals. We may include unidentifiable quotes from discussion groups and interviews in publications, but these will not include any information that could identify schools or individuals.

What will happen to the results of the research?

After the project is complete, we will send you a report summarising the findings from the research.

Any research publications will not identify your school or any participants. If you would like a copy of the research publication, once it's available, just let us know.

What if there's a problem?

If you have a concern about any part of this project, please speak to **the iCATS-i2i team on iCATS@psych.ox.ac.uk** or 01865 618614 and they will do their best to address your concern. The researcher should acknowledge your concern within 10 working days and give you an indication of how he/she intends to deal with it.

If you remain unhappy or wish to make a formal complaint, please contact the **Chair of the Research Ethics Committee** at the University of Oxford (Chair, Medical Sciences Inter- Divisional Research Ethics Committee; Email (ethics@medsci.ox.ac.uk); Address: Research Services, University of Oxford, Wellington Square, Oxford OX1 2JD). The chair will seek to resolve the matter in a timely manner.

If you have any concerns about any member of the research team, you are free to contact the two University of Oxford safeguarding leads:

Julian Duxfield

University of Oxford Director of Human Resources

Tel: 01865 270 152

email: julian.duxfield@admin.ox.ac.uk

Catherine Paxton

Director of Student Welfare and Support Services

Tel: 01865 280 444 (direct line) or 01865 280 459

email: director.swss@admin.ox.ac.uk

Who has reviewed the research project?

This project has been reviewed by and received ethical clearance through the University of Oxford Central University Research Ethics Committee.

All researchers involved in the project have been through the enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service checking process and received approval by the University of Oxford for working with children.

Please also be aware that current NHS and government guidance on social distancing and use of PPE will be followed at each school visit to protect both participants and researchers from COVID-19 infection/transmission.

