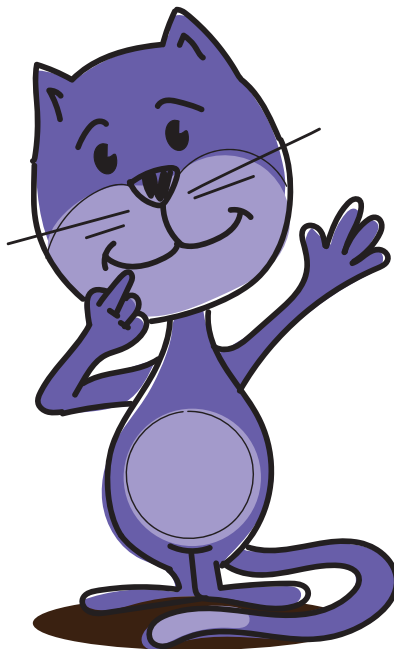


Minimising Young Children's Anxiety Through Schools

## INFORMATION SHEET FOR HEADTEACHERS AND SCHOOL STAFF

Version 1.1 – 08.02.2021, Ethics ID R62531/RE002



## An invitation to your school

We would like to invite your school to take part in a research project called **MY-CATS**.

## What is MY-CATS?

**MY-CATS** – Minimising Young Children’s Anxiety Through Schools – is a research project, funded by the Kavli Trust. **MY-CATS** is a randomised controlled trial which aims to evaluate a new way of identifying and supporting young children who might benefit from help to build confidence and minimise problems with anxiety, now and in the future.

MY-CATS involves parents completing questionnaires to help us identify which children may be most likely to benefit from support, and then offering some of these parents online and telephone support. The support is designed to help parents encourage their child to build confidence and to provide them with skills and strategies for the future.

### MY-CATS Team

#### Chief Investigator:



Professor Cathy Creswell

#### Trial Manager:



Anna Placzek

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**Website:** [www.osiresearch.org.uk/my-cats](http://www.osiresearch.org.uk/my-cats)

**Email:** [mycats@psych.ox.ac.uk](mailto:mycats@psych.ox.ac.uk)

**Telephone number:** 01865 618614

## Why are we doing MY-CATS?

Anxiety problems are common in children. Children who have significant problems with anxiety are more likely than their peers to experience mental health problems and impaired quality of life in adulthood.

Helping children to build confidence from a young age could help them to have fewer problems with fears and worries in the future.

## Why has your school been chosen?

We are inviting mainstream primary schools in England to take part. We are looking for a range of schools to be involved, although small schools and special education schools do not fall within the scope of the project.

We are looking for schools with a minimum of two classes of Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 pupils. We are hoping about 5400 children (aged 4-7) from about 60 schools will be involved in the screening process in order to identify 1080 children who are eligible for the trial.

## MY-CATS Lead

We will ask you to nominate a member of school staff who can act as the 'MY-CATS lead' within the school, and be the primary point of contact for the research team when liaising with the school.

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

### 1. SCHOOL CONSENT

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



### 2. INFORMATION FOR PARENTS

We will ask the MY-CATS lead to distribute information leaflets, consent forms and screening questionnaires to **parents of children in Reception, Year 1 and Year 2**, via a secure online system. We have also developed materials for an information session for parents which we will run with the school MY-CATS lead (or school staff can use the materials to run this themselves if they prefer).

We will provide the parent information leaflets to include as a link in a newsletter, on your school website and/or to send via email or SMS. We are really keen for as many families as possible to be involved. We will talk to the MY-CATS lead about things we can do to help encourage families to get involved with the research project.



### **3. CONSENT FOR PARENTS**

We will ask parents if they agree to their family taking part in the screening. If they agree to take part, we will ask them to complete a consent form electronically.



### **4. SCREENING QUESTIONNAIRES FOR PARENTS**

We will ask parents to complete a short online questionnaire about whether they experience any difficulties with anxiety, and to what extent their child experiences anxiety and shyness. We will also ask parents to provide some information about their family and their contact details so we can get in touch.



### **5. FEEDBACK FOR PARENTS AND TRIAL INVITATION**

We will provide all families with written feedback, and in some cases feedback by telephone, to let them know whether their questionnaire responses indicate that they are eligible for the trial.

If a family is eligible → we will invite them to take part in the trial.

If a family is not eligible → we will provide them with some resources in case any concerns surrounding anxiety problems in their child crop up in the future.



### **6. CONSENT AND BASELINE QUESTIONNAIRES FOR PARENTS**

We will ask parents if they agree to their family taking part in the trial, and if they do, ask them to complete an online consent form.

We will then ask them to complete the same online questionnaires that they completed earlier on in the study, as well as some more questionnaires about them and their child.



### **7. SCHOOL RANDOMISATION**

If families agree to take part in the trial, we will randomly allocate them to one of two options.

A computer will determine which group your school will be in, and therefore which group the family will be in.



### **8. ONLINE AND TELEPHONE SUPPORT FOR PARENTS**

Families will be offered a parent-led, online support programme.

You can find a bit more information on what the programme involves on page 6.

### **8. USUAL SCHOOL PRACTICE**

Families will be offered pdf versions of the parent-led support programme at the end of the trial.



### **9. 6-WEEK & 12-WEEK QUESTIONNAIRES**

We will ask parents to complete some more online questionnaires about them and their child.



### **10. 12-MONTH INTERVIEW AND QUESTIONNAIRES**

We will contact parents directly to ask them to take part in an interview by telephone/video-call with a member of our research team.

During this interview, we will ask parents a standard set of questions about anxiety that their child may or may not be experiencing.

This interview normally takes about one hour.

We will ask parents for permission to make audio recordings of their interviews. This will allow us to make sure the interviews are always conducted in the same way.

We will also ask parents to complete some more online questionnaires about them and their child.

### **11. INFORMATION ON USUAL SCHOOL PRACTICE**

We will ask school headteachers to nominate a member of staff to complete a short form to provide information on any activities related to social, emotional, and mental health delivered in their school during the trial period. This will take about 10-15 minutes.

This information will help us to understand and interpret the trial findings.

### FEEDBACK INTERVIEWS

We may also ask the MY-CATS lead to distribute information about follow-up interviews to children, parents and school staff. These interviews will help us to collect feedback on the project and make improvements.

We hope to organise one-to-one interviews with some children, parents and school staff from some schools that take part in MY-CATS (approximately 30-40 interviews in total). We will invite any members of school staff who express an interest to take part in an interview. We will conduct the interviews by telephone or video-call. Each will last about an hour.

The interviews 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.

## Online and telephone support for parents

The aim of the programme is to help parents develop strategies to support their child to build confidence and face their everyday fears, so that they have fewer problems with fears and worries in the future.

The support programme involves:

- Access to a **website** with a series of 7 weekly modules and **activities** to work through with their child. Each module takes about 30 minutes to complete.
- **7 weekly telephone sessions** with a **wellbeing practitioner**, and a follow-up session about a month later (15-20 minutes each)
- An optional **child game** designed to help motivate the child

## Does your school have to take part?

No. Your school does not have to take part in this research. You can choose whether your school takes part.

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

## What are the possible advantages and disadvantages of taking part?

### Possible advantages:

- Your school will be part of a large-scale, high profile research project to help build confidence in children at a young age so that they are less likely to have problems with anxiety in the future.
- Once the project is complete, we will provide you with a report that shows how your school compares to all participating schools on questionnaire responses about child anxiety symptoms. The report schools receive will only identify their own school, not any other schools. 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.
- Families who participate in the trial will be offered the parent-led programme, either online with telephone support (early in the study) or as a pdf version (when the study ends).

We have good reason to think that most families who complete the programme (either as online and telephone support or as a pdf version at the end of the trial) will **benefit**. We know from previous research that families often find it helpful to learn skills and strategies that they can use to help reduce children's problems with anxiety, now and in the future. This trial will help us to find the best way to teach these skills and strategies that is most helpful for families. We will offer some families support straight away (online with telephone support) and others will receive support later (via a pdf)- this will help us to find out more about how many families benefit from getting the support straight away.

- We will also provide families who participate in the trial with a report of their detailed anxiety assessment and information about sources of support. Families can choose how many copies of the report they would like, and will be free to share with school staff and other professionals/services, to facilitate referrals if appropriate.

**To say thank you**, we will provide families with £10 for each follow-up questionnaire and anxiety assessment they complete (up to the value of £30). We will also offer schools £3 for each set of baseline questionnaires completed by parents. You can choose to receive this payment via bank transfer or as a voucher. Parents, children and school staff who take part in feedback interviews will also be offered a £10 voucher.

### What happens to the information we collect?

- All information we collect in this research about your school, children and parents will be kept secure and in confidence. Schools and parents will be provided with a

Privacy Notice (also available on our website [www.osiresearch.org.uk/my-cats](http://www.osiresearch.org.uk/my-cats)) 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. This document will be destroyed once data analysis has been completed and carefully checked.
- Online data collected from parents will use a secure website, with end-to-end encryption, and data will be held on a secure server.
- With parents' permission, we will let your school know whether a family have been offered the online intervention.
- We will not share information we collect from parents/carers with anyone else, without parent permission. The only circumstances where we would share information 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 MY-CATS 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.
- Audio-recordings will be temporarily stored on audio-recorders, and once transferred to the secure University server, will be removed from the audio-recorder. We will store audio-recording of feedback interviews until recordings have been transcribed and detailed analysis of transcriptions completed. These will then be safely destroyed.
- 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.

## 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 **MY-CATS** team on (telephone: 01865 618614; email: [mycats@psych.ox.ac.uk](mailto:mycats@psych.ox.ac.uk)) who 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 Medical Sciences Interdivisional Research Ethics Committee** at the University of Oxford who will seek to resolve the matter as soon as possible. Email: [ethics@medsci.ox.ac.uk](mailto:ethics@medsci.ox.ac.uk); Address: Research Services, University of Oxford, Wellington Square, Oxford, OX1 2JD.

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](mailto: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](mailto:director.swss@admin.ox.ac.uk)

## Who has reviewed the research project?

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

All researchers working on the project have been through the enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service checking process and received approval by the University of Oxford to work with children and families.

### Thank you for reading this information.

If you are interested in taking part and would like to talk to the MY-CATS team to find out more, please get in touch on 01865 618614 or [mycats@psych.ox.ac.uk](mailto:mycats@psych.ox.ac.uk).

