

BITUP

Research Project Information Sheet

Dear Parent/Carer,

Over the coming year, St Margaret's is taking part in a research project called 'BITUP'. Below, we describe why we are doing this research project, and what is involved for you and your child.

Please read the information carefully and keep this sheet for future reference. If you decide that you do NOT want to be involved in this project or for your child to be involved in the research, then please complete and return the slip at the end of this letter to your child's school by Friday 22nd September.

If you are happy to be involved in the project and for your child to be involved in the associated research, you do not have to do anything.

If you change your mind later, you are free to withdraw yourself and your child from this project at any time by using the contact details at the end of this letter.

BITUP is a programme which aims to **improve communications between schools and parents/carers** regarding school attendance. It involves **sending parents regular updates about their children's recent attendance** if it falls below 95%. The EEF and YEF are funding an evaluation of the programme to assess whether BITUP improves pupils' school attendance.

What does this project involve?

The purpose of this research is to help **improve communications between schools and parents/carers regarding school attendance**. In this project, participating schools will be delivering a programme of half-termly text messages to parents/carers who have children with attendance below 95%. The messages were designed based on academic research and feedback from parents and schools.

A Bristol based trial has already tested the impact of this programme with promising results – exploratory outcomes showed that the messages boosted the proportion of students keeping good attendance records (over 95%) by 4 percentage points. In a large-scale trial in the US, similar messages led to a 10% reduction in chronic absence.

We are conducting this study across around 100 schools in England as a randomised controlled trial (RCT). This means at each school half of the participating parents/carers will be randomly chosen to be eligible to receive the text messages. These parents/carers belong to the **'intervention' group**.

The other half of the participating parents/carers will not be eligible to receive the text messages. These parents/carers belong to the **'control' group**.

The random allocation of parents/carers is essential to the evaluation as it is the best way to evaluate the effects of the programme. At this stage we do not know whether you will or will not receive the half-termly text messages, however, we will be collecting data on the pupils from all schools in the research project, regardless of whether the pupils are in the intervention or control groups.

Who is undertaking the research?

The Behavioural Insights Team (BIT – a social purpose company) is delivering this programme with St Margaret's in partnership with The Education Endowment Foundation (charity) and Youth Endowment Fund (charity). Kantar Public (research business) are the independent evaluators who will determine whether the BITUP programme improves school attendance. The school will send out the half-termly text messages.

What is involved if my child takes part?

If you and your child are happy to take part, the school will provide BIT and Kantar Public with data about your child (as detailed below).

All participating families (defined as having siblings within the same school) will be randomly allocated to either be in the 'intervention group' or the 'control group' for the 2023-2024 school year. For parents/carers in the intervention group, the school will send half-termly attendance communications to you directly if your child has attendance below 95% in the previous half-term. Parents/carers in the control group will not be sent any messages as part of the trial. Pupils' attendance data will be used to measure the impact of the programme on attendance.

Parents of pupils in participating schools will be invited to take part in a short online survey at the end of the school year, and a small number of parents and their children will be invited to take part in interviews to discuss their experience of the BITUP programme. Participation in the online survey and interviews will be voluntary.

What data will be gathered?

If you are happy to take part, the BIT delivery team will request the following data about your child from the school: full name, school, parent/carer first name, attendance, year group, Unique Pupil Reference Number (UPN).

The school will then send the half-termly attendance communications to you directly if you are part of the intervention group and have a child with attendance below 95% in the previous half term. The school may use your personal information (e.g. address, mobile phone number) to communicate with you - BIT will not have access to this data. Kantar Public, the evaluation team, will request the following data about your child from the school to evaluate the programme: UPN, DoB, pupil full name, pupil school, primary parent phone number, enrolment status, year group, admission date, attendance register data (including

authorised and unauthorised absences) for the full year, Free School Meal eligibility, English as an Additional Language status, exclusion status, gender, ethnicity, special educational need (SEN) status, Public Care status, pupils' sibling name(s), sibling date(s) of birth, and sibling student ID(s).

Responses to the voluntary parent survey, and information shared during the voluntary parent and pupil interviews Kantar Public will conduct with a small number of parents, will all be collected and stored securely by Kantar Public. This information will not be shared with schools.

Neither Kantar Public or BIT will use your name, your child's name or the name of the school in any report arising from the research. All personal data will be treated with strictest confidence in accordance with the requirements of the UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR) and the Data Protection Act 2018.

Data gathered by BIT will be securely stored on BIT's GDrive until its deletion in approximately February 2025. Data gathered by Kantar Public will be stored on Kantar Public's secure server in a password protected folder only accessible to the immediate evaluation team until its deletion in approximately June 2026. Once the trial is finished, pseudo anonymised data (data from which it's not possible to directly identify any young person from the study) will be added to the EEF archive which is stored in the Office for National Statistics' Secure Research Service. The EEF will keep information in the EEF archive for as long as it is needed for research purposes. It will be possible to link the records held in the EEF archive to other public datasets such as education and criminal justice datasets for future research.

Please see the [BIT privacy notice](#), [Kantar Public privacy notice](#) and [EEF privacy notice](#) for more details about how your personal data will be processed.



BIT privacy notice



Kantar Public privacy



EEF privacy notice

What will happen to the results of the research project?

The results of this project will be reported by the Education Endowment Foundation and Youth Endowment Fund in 2025. The report will be freely available and will be shared with your child's school. Results in this report or any other future reported findings will be anonymous – no pupils, parents or schools will be identifiable from any reports.

Contact for further information

If you have any questions about how we will use your data or your child's data or about the way the study is conducted, **please email us on BITUP@bi.team**. You can also contact the data protection officer, Mr M D'Arcy, at St Margaret's through the school admin e-mail address.

Thank you very much for your time!

If you DO NOT want to take part, or you DO NOT want your child to take part, please complete the form below.

If you are happy for your child to participate, you do not need to do anything but please keep this form for your information.

I DO NOT wish for data about my child to be collected as part of this research.

Child's name:Date of birth:

Child's tutor:

Parent/carer name (BLOCK CAPITALS)

Parent/carer signature:

Date

Please detach and return the completed form to the main school office
(admin@stmargaretsacademy.com) by Friday 22nd September.