



## “Exploring the sense of identity and belonging of female secondary school pupils with autism”

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**Contact Details for UCL Data Protection Officer:** [data-protection@ucl.ac.uk](mailto:data-protection@ucl.ac.uk)  
**This study has been approved by the UCL Research Ethics Committee:** 17/10/2018  
**Project ID number:** 14005/001

I am a Trainee Educational Psychologist at University College London (UCL) and would like to invite your daughter to take part in my research project which aims to improve the understanding of what it is like to be a female secondary school pupil with a diagnosis of autism.

Please read this information carefully before you decide whether you would like your daughter to take part. If you have any further questions or concerns that you would like to discuss, please contact me on [rose.mcgeown.17@ucl.ac.uk](mailto:rose.mcgeown.17@ucl.ac.uk). This research is being supervised by Dr Gavin Morgan at UCL who can be contacted on [gavin.morgan@ucl.ac.uk](mailto:gavin.morgan@ucl.ac.uk). If you are happy that you understand what taking part will involve for your child, and you are happy for them to participate, please sign the consent form. You can keep this information sheet to keep, so you can refer back to it at any time.

If you give your consent, your daughter will then have the chance to hear about the project and decide whether she would like to consent to participate.

### What is the project about?

There is a current lack of research, understanding and support available for girls and women with autism, with research predominately focusing on autistic males. This research project therefore aims to explore what it is like to be an autistic female secondary school pupil, specifically focusing on their sense of identity and belonging in school. This project aims to use questionnaires and interviews to explore these topics and make recommendations to schools in how to promote the inclusion of autistic female pupils, to improve their



experience of school. Female pupils both with and without a diagnosis of ASD will be asked to complete a short questionnaire about how they feel about school. Following this a smaller number of pupils with an autism diagnosis will be asked if they would like to participate in an interview with myself to talk in more detail about their experiences of secondary school and being a female with an autism diagnosis. This interview will be conducted in school, unless specifically requested elsewhere. On the consent form you will have the option to consent to your daughter participating in either or both phases of the research project.

### **Why has my daughter been chosen?**

The research project is seeking female identifying secondary school pupils with a diagnosis of autism to participate. Pupils can attend mainstream or specialist schools in years 7 to 13. Your daughter has been identified as fitting this criteria and therefore has been approached to participate in the project.

### **Does my daughter have to take part?**

It is completely up to you whether you decide to allow your daughter to take part in the research project or not. If you do not want them to take part, that's absolutely fine and you will not be disadvantaged in any way as a result of this decision. If you do want them to take part you will be requested to complete a consent form and will be given this information sheet to keep. You can withdraw your daughter from the project at any time without given reason and this will not result in penalty or loss of benefits you may otherwise be entitled to. If you decide to withdraw your daughter from the study, you will be asked what you wish to happen to the data provided up to that point.

### **What will my daughter be asked to do?**

Your daughter will be asked to complete a short questionnaire comprising of 18 questions, in which she will need to rate the statements between 1 (not at all true) and 5 (completely true). There are no right or wrong answers. This questionnaire is being used to explore how strong a sense of belonging pupils with and without an autism diagnosis have at secondary school. This questionnaire will take only a few minutes to complete. In addition to this questionnaire, some data about the pupil including their age, year group and type of school they attend (e.g. mainstream or special) will be collected for further analysis for any patterns in the data. This data will be stored anonymously.

Pupils with autism may be asked if they would like to participate in an interview with the researcher. The interview will aim to explore these pupils' experience of secondary school in a relaxed and informal setting. This interview will last a minimum of 10 minutes, but could be longer depending on your daughter's engagement. These interviews will be audio taped to enable the researcher to transcribe and analyse them. No other use will be made of these audio recordings without your written permission, and no one outside the project will be allowed access to the original recordings.

### **What are the possible benefits of taking part?**

Whilst there are no immediate benefits for those pupils participating in the project, it is hoped that your daughter will enjoy taking part in the research project which aims to raise the profile of females with autism in secondary schools.



### **What are the possible disadvantages and risks of taking part?**

If your daughter participates in an interview as part of the research project and she discloses any information that puts herself or others at risk, I will be required to report this to the safeguarding lead at her school to ensure she is kept safe.

Although this research project aims to be enjoyable and to raise the profile and understanding of pupils with autism, there is a risk that your daughter may feel upset when reflecting upon her time at secondary school if her experience has not been pleasant. The researcher aims to make the interview experience as comfortable as possible and your daughter can request to stop the interview at any time.

### **What if I am unhappy about something that happens as part of the research project?**

If you are unhappy about any aspect of the project, then please contact me at [rose.mcgeown.17@ucl.ac.uk](mailto:rose.mcgeown.17@ucl.ac.uk) or my research supervisor at UCL, Dr Gavin Morgan at [gavin.morgan@ucl.ac.uk](mailto:gavin.morgan@ucl.ac.uk) in the first instance. You may also contact Professor Sandra Dunsmuir on [s.dunsmuir@ucl.ac.uk](mailto:s.dunsmuir@ucl.ac.uk) if you have a more significant complaint or feel that your concern has not been heard. If you still feel that your complaint has not been handled to your satisfaction, then you can contact the Chair of the UCL Research Ethics Committee via [ethics@ucl.ac.uk](mailto:ethics@ucl.ac.uk).

### **Will information gathered about my daughter be kept confidential?**

All the information that we collect about your daughter during the course of the research will be kept strictly confidential and stored securely on a UCL electronic system. We will not be storing or processing your child's data against their name and she will not be able to be identified in any reports or publications. All of the data will be deleted following the completion of the project.

Please note that confidentiality will be maintained as above, unless during conversation we hear anything which makes us worried that someone might be in danger of harm or there are compelling and legitimate reasons for this to be breached. If this was the case we would inform you of any decisions which may limit confidentiality, and may have to inform relevant agencies.

### **What will happen to the results of the research project?**

The personal data provided will be secured until analysed and may be subject to auditing to ensure accuracy and quality control. It will be kept until the researcher's doctorate Viva is undertaken and any amendments made; after which it will be destroyed. All personal data will be destroyed by October 2020. No personal information will be archived. Only consent forms will be kept for longer.

The results of this research project will be written up to form part of a doctoral thesis. The results may also be published in academic journals to contribute to the growing literature exploring females with autism. If you would like to obtain a copy of the final research report please email [rose.mcgeown.17@ucl.ac.uk](mailto:rose.mcgeown.17@ucl.ac.uk).

### **Contact for further information**

If you have any questions or would like any further information about the research project please contact Rose McGeown (researcher) via [rose.mcgeown.17@ucl.ac.uk](mailto:rose.mcgeown.17@ucl.ac.uk) or Dr Gavin Morgan (research supervisor) via



gavin.morgan@ucl.ac.uk. Alternatively you can write to us at *Educational Psychology Group, University College London, 26 Bedford Way, London WC1H 0AP. Tel: 02076795307*

### **Data Protection Privacy Notice**

*In addition to the information above, we also need to let you know some specific information relating to our processing of your daughter's data for this project.*

The data controller for this project is University College London (UCL). The UCL Data Protection Office provides oversight of all UCL activities involving the processing of personal data, and can be contacted at [data-protection@ucl.ac.uk](mailto:data-protection@ucl.ac.uk).

If you voluntarily agree that your daughter may take part in the project, we will ask you to read carefully and, if you are happy, sign a consent form. This will include consent for us to process your daughter's personal information for the research purposes outlined in the information sheet. The legal basis that will be used to process your daughter's personal data will be *performance of a task in the public interest*. Your consent will be taken as the legal basis for us being able to process your daughter's data for these purposes. You have the right to withdraw your daughter from the research project without given reason, unless the data has already been anonymised and processed, at which point it will no longer be possible to identify her personal information and remove this from the data set.

The personal data provided will be processed so long as it is required for the research project. We will anonymise or pseudo-anonymise the personal data provided, and will endeavour to minimise the processing of personal data wherever possible. Your daughter will not be able to be identified in any reports or publications of the research project. The data provided is solely the responsibility of the researchers undertaking the study and will not be made available to any third party, commercial or international organisation. The personal data provided will be secured until analysed and may be subject to auditing to ensure accuracy and quality control. It will be kept until the researcher's doctorate Viva is undertaken and any amendments made; after which it will be destroyed. All personal data will be destroyed by October 2020. Only consent forms will be kept for longer.

If you become concerned about how your child's personal data is being processed, please contact UCL in the first instance at [data-protection@ucl.ac.uk](mailto:data-protection@ucl.ac.uk). If you remain unsatisfied, you may wish to contact the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO). Contact details, and details of your rights, are available on the ICO website at: <https://ico.org.uk/for-organisations/data-protection-reform/overview-of-the-gdpr/individuals-rights/>.

**Thank you for reading this information sheet and for considering taking part in this research study. If you are happy to give your consent for your daughter to participate in the study, please click on the link below:**

**[https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id= oivH5ipW0yTySEKEdmlwnXbKyFoO9hErj\\_rkFQ8KZIUQkNRNk02UudTRkQzSkJCUEXKV09BNIMzSi4u](https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id= oivH5ipW0yTySEKEdmlwnXbKyFoO9hErj_rkFQ8KZIUQkNRNk02UudTRkQzSkJCUEXKV09BNIMzSi4u)**