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Dear Parents/ Guardians,

At Laughton Community Primary School, we take a keen interest in what educational research can offer us to provide an outstanding learning experience and our vision has been developed through adopting a Growth Mindset in all we do.

Recently, we've been invited to take part in the **The Child Voice Project**, an exciting new research initiative undertaken by School of Psychology, University of Sussex.

The project explores children's vocal behaviour and how it relates to sex stereotypes affecting peer relations and career choices, with the ultimate aim to create innovative educational tools for gender equality.

I wanted to let you know a little more about the project in general, in advance of you receiving more detailed information from the University of Sussex later this term, as the project gets underway.

Why are we conducting this project?

A large body of research indicates that these stereotypes impact on children's choice of activities from early on in their school life (e.g., a boy not riding a bike in the playground because it is pink), and older children also appear to hold very rigid views about jobs and hobbies, areas of study, and relationships, judging some to only be appropriate to one sex or the other.

Differences in children's vocal behaviour may also follow sex-stereotypical lines. We hope that our project will illuminate on children's control of their voices, as well as their perceptual relevance in making sex-stereotypical attributions for children's present and future behaviour.

The project is funded by the Leverhulme Trust and has the backing of WISE, the national campaign organisation for the increase of women in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM), and has been ethically approved by the University of Sussex.

What are the benefits for our school if you decide to take part?

Challenging these stereotypes at the earliest stages of a child's development is likely to have widely beneficial effects in terms of improving educational/life outcomes for children. Our project aims to increase our understanding of how these stereotypes are formed, and the findings will contribute to the development of practical strategies, for implementation in schools, to combat and challenge stereotypical choices and behaviours, particularly in relation to career choice.

As a small thank you for our kind co-operation, the school will receive a small donation per child for each study you decide to take part in and each child will receive a small gift (e.g. book, stickers) for their participation.

What is your child asked to do?

In all, the project will involve over 700 children across a number of schools in East Sussex and entails 6 short (10-30 mins) audio-recording and perception studies to be conducted individually with children on the school premises, at a time convenient to the school. At our school, there will be a member of staff present and the studies will be approximately 10-15 minutes. You will be given full details in the letter of consent but examples of activities may include:

- children listen to a recording on headphones and rate it by pointing to a scale
- children describe a cartoon scene
- children rate certain activities such as doing craft or gardening (not really, sometimes, very much).
- children speak the lines of a fictional character

Are there any risks to taking part?

There are no risks to taking part except those encountered in normal life situations. Before beginning any data collection session, the researchers will stress to the children that there are no right or wrong answers to the task. They will also emphasise that the purpose of the research is not to assess any one individuals but to learn more about general patterns across larger samples of people. Children will be asked if they would like to take part and given the option to withdraw at any point.

What will happen to the results and any personal information related to my child?

Data management will follow the 1988 Data Protection Act. The recordings will be anonymised. Information about your child that could identify them to someone else will not be kept. For each study, we would like to invite children, from Reception to Year 6, to participate and each child can take part in as many or as few studies as you see fit.

The researchers (all DBS-checked) aim to conduct all school visits between **October 2017** and **October 2018**.

What do I do next?

At this stage, we would like to let you know that letters will be sent home to parents/ guardians during this term, and that if you would like to be involved, you can give your consent by responding to the request on the form. You will be asked for your consent in one of two ways. Either the study asks you to opt in, in which case you return your permission by a deadline stated on the letter (there are a limited number of places and we cannot guarantee that everyone who responds will participate). Or the study asks you to opt out, in which case you only return the form, by the deadline, if you do not want to accept. The Head Teacher has given approval to participate in this research, after having reviewed the intended research procedures as it was thought that they were suitable for pupils and do not deviate from the normal curriculum.

Can I change my mind?

You and your child have the right to withdraw from the research at any time up to one month after the data has been collected by emailing: v.cartel@sussex.ac.uk. Withdrawing from the research will have no effect on your child's grades, academic standing, or any services they may receive at school.

Participation in future research

If you or your child are interested in taking part in future studies, as part of this project, exploring how stereotypes develop, please contact the team (details below).

You are also very welcome to contact the **Child Voice Project** team at v.cartai@sussex.ac.uk, if you have any questions and if you require any additional information, please also visit the project's website: <http://thechildvoiceproject.blogspot.co.uk/>

On behalf of the **Child Voice Project** team (Profs David Reby, Robin Banerjee, Alan Garnham and Jane Oakhill and Dr Valentina Cartei)



Supported by:

