

# Parent, carer and guardian information sheet

February 2025

## What is the Theatre in Education project?

It is a project to learn whether using drama productions - as part of Personal, Social, Health and Economics (PSHE) education - helps prevent young people trying or using illegal drugs. The aim to understand how drama productions change knowledge and attitudes of illegal drug use and their ability to make informed decisions. Here we inform you about the questionnaire surveys; at a later stage a small number of children and parents will be informed and asked about their child's possible participation in group discussions, not long after the performance of the play. The project is being run by East Sussex County Council, the University of Brighton and secondary schools. It is funded by the National Institute for Health and Care Research (NIHR).

## How are children and parents/carers/guardians involved?

All secondary schools in East Sussex have been invited to receive the drama production, *Time Out*, in March 2025, as part of the regular PSHE education support provided by East Sussex County Council. Your child's school is receiving the production and will invite children from their year group to watch it.

To learn about how *Time Out* changes pupil's knowledge, attitudes and abilities, two pupil surveys will be run – one *before* the production and one *after*. You will have the opportunity to tell your child's school if you do **not** want your child to participate in the surveys.

## What will my child be asked to do?

Your child will be asked to complete two 10-minute surveys online, during class time. The survey has questions about pupils' thoughts on the theatre production; knowledge about drug use; motivation and experiences relevant to drug use, whether linked to social media or face-to-face; and wellbeing. Pupils will be given full information about what the survey involves and their rights over their information. They will be asked whether they agree with completing each survey, as it is a voluntary activity.

## Who will have access to the survey responses?

The survey will be online, and pupils' responses will be stored on a secure, password-protected database managed by University of Brighton. Only approved researchers at the University of Brighton and East Sussex County Council will have access to the data for analysis. Schools will not store or receive any copies of the information that pupils, including your child, share.

## How is the information used?

The data will be analysed by researchers at the University of Brighton to understand the effectiveness of the Theatre-in-Education project. The findings may be:

- written up as a report for members of the research and education communities to understand the impact of the theatre production
- published in academic journals or presented at educational conferences
- shared with schools to enhance future education programmes
- presented in a short film which will be available to the public.

The data is anonymous. Meaning that no information will identify individuals in any reports, publications or presentations.

Pupils will hear about the overall findings of the research from teachers, through their PSHE lessons. Full, summary and accessible reports will be made available on the [East Sussex Joint Strategic Needs Assessment](#) website in autumn 2025.

## Does my child have to take part?

You have the right to opt-out your child from the research. This will not affect your child's participation in the Theatre-in-Education programme linked to PSHE education lessons or any other school activities.

Participation in the research is voluntary, and your child will be provided with full information and asked to give consent for each separate part of the research. Pupils can withdraw at any time without giving a reason, and you can tell us if you change your mind and want to withdraw your child. If you/your child chooses to withdraw after they have completed and submitted the survey, we may not be able to withdraw their data since it will be anonymised (i.e. it will not contain any identifiable data). We will therefore still use the information your child has provided up to that point.

## What are the risks of my child taking part?

There is a risk that the research activity could bring up uncomfortable feelings or memories for your child. There will always be a teacher on hand to respond to pupils' questions or concerns whilst they take part in research activities, and they will be encouraged to speak with a teacher or safeguarding lead if they feel affected by the research. Full details on other sources of support will be provided.

## What are the benefits of my child taking part?

There are no personal benefits to pupils for participating in the research. However, the more pupils who participate, the more information we will have to help us understand the impact of the theatre production. Your child's participation will help shape future PSHE education.

## How is my child's data protected?

To ensure compliance with GDPR and data protection regulations, only data that is necessary for this project will be collected. All information will be stored securely and managed in line with the University of Brighton and East Sussex County Council data protection and information security policies. For further details, please see the privacy notice at: [www.eastsussex.gov.uk/privacy/theatre-in-education-research-pupil-survey](http://www.eastsussex.gov.uk/privacy/theatre-in-education-research-pupil-survey).

## Who has reviewed the research project?

Approval from the University of Brighton Research Ethics Committee is pending and full approval will be in place before the survey questionnaires are distributed to schools for completion by pupils.

## Contact details

If you have questions, concerns or complaints about the project, please contact Professor Jörg Huber ([j.huber@brighton.ac.uk](mailto:j.huber@brighton.ac.uk)) or David Bishop ([david.bishop@eastsussex.gov.uk](mailto:david.bishop@eastsussex.gov.uk)). You can also contact the ethics committee that reviewed the project, the Cross-School Research Ethics Committee A, and the Chair, Dr Lucy Redhead ([l.redhead@brighton.ac.uk](mailto:l.redhead@brighton.ac.uk)).

If you need this information in an alternative format please contact Gemma Faithfull by email: [gemma.faithfull@eastsussex.gov.uk](mailto:gemma.faithfull@eastsussex.gov.uk) or call 07922 574718.

## What happens next?

If you **agree** with your child being invited to participate in the surveys, **you do not need to do anything**.

If you do **not** agree with your child taking part in the research at all you can **use the accompanying opt-out form and return it to your child's school**.

**Thank you for taking the time to read this information sheet and for considering whether your child takes part in this important research to help improve PSHE education.**

