

**“Growing Up Online: Children’s Online Activities, Harm and Safety in Northern Ireland”**

06 February 2023

Dear Parent/Carer,

**Re: Consent Form for Parents of Children aged under 16 years**

I am writing to seek your consent to allow your child to participate in an important new research study entitled ‘Growing Up Online: Children’s online activities, harm and safety in Northern Ireland – an Evidence Report’ funded by the Safeguarding Board for Northern Ireland (SBNI). I am leading a research team to complete the research over the next 3 months.

I would like to invite your child to take part in an online survey aimed at children and young people aged 8-18. The survey will take approximately 15-20 minutes to complete, and it will explore children and young people’s online experiences, what they enjoy doing online, any negative experiences they may have had, and how well trained they are to stay safe online. I hope that the children and young people will enjoy the opportunity to play an important role in this research. This survey will be completed in class at school under the supervision of a class teacher.

Please see the accompanying information sheet and consent form for a concise outline of what your child’s involvement would mean. Should you have any queries, please contact me by email: [n.purdy@stran.ac.uk](mailto:n.purdy@stran.ac.uk).

If your child is under the age of 16, and you do not want your child to complete the survey, please contact either their class teacher or the Principal.

Thank you for your time in giving this matter your consideration.

Yours faithfully,



Dr Noel Purdy

Director of Research and Scholarship/ Principal Investigator

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## Information Sheet for Parents/Carers of Children under 16

### “Growing Up Online: Children’s Online Activities, Harm and Safety in Northern Ireland”

#### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study is to undertake an evidence report relating to children’s online activities, harms, and safety. Specifically, the report will examine the overall nature, scope and extent of online harm and safety experienced by children and young people from different groups and communities in NI, including the identification of trends and emerging issues, profile characteristics and vulnerable groups; and risk and protective factors, interventions and suggestions.

#### **Invitation to participate**

We would like to invite your child to complete a survey for this project, where they will be asked to share their experiences of online activities.

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

It is up to you and your child to decide whether to take part. Your child does not need to participate, and can choose to opt out of completing the survey by contacting their class teacher or the principal of the school.

#### **Will my taking part in this project be kept confidential?**

All the information we collect during the course of the research will be kept strictly confidential. You will not be able to be identified in any reports or publications. No data will be reported or released which contains the names of any school or pupil. Any data collected will be stored in line with GDPR regulations and internal Stranmillis University College data storage policies and procedures.

#### **Are there possible disadvantages and/or risks in taking part?**

Participating in the research is not anticipated to cause your child any disadvantages or discomfort. The research team commits to following school safeguarding and child protection policies at all times, reporting any incidents or disclosures to the school and following direction from the school to ensure compliance.

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

It is hoped that this work will have a beneficial impact on informing strategic future planning in relation to children’s online activities, harm and safety in Northern Ireland. It is hoped that the children and young people will enjoy participating in the research.



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

Results of the research will be shared in a detailed report to be submitted to the Safeguarding Board NI. We reiterate that no individual or school will be named in any report or publication. The findings of the research will be used to inform the delivery of the Northern Ireland Executive's Online Safety Strategy Action Plan.

### **Ethics**

The research has received full ethical approval from the Ethics Committee at Stranmillis University College, Belfast

### **Contacts for further information**

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