



Consent for Research Participation

IRB #: 23-021-GAI-EXM

IRB Approval Date: 3/2/2023

Dear Families and Guardians,

Health teachers at Lowell Public Schools and researchers at the University of Massachusetts Lowell (UML) are working together to improve health education for middle school students. A group of students and researchers from UML will be coming to your child's classroom in March to talk with students about their health class, to learn more about what they like and what they hope to improve about their education. You can learn more about this research project below and decide whether you are OK with your child participating or not. There are no negative consequences for you or your child, whatever you decide.

Study Title: Understanding Adolescent Perspectives on Health Education in Lowell Public Schools

Researchers: Larissa Gaias, PhD, Psychology Department, University of Massachusetts Lowell

What is the purpose of the study?

- The purpose of the study is to understand middle school students' perspectives and ideas for how to improve health education.

What will my child do?

- Your child will participate in a small group discussion with other students in their class. During the class period students will discuss general questions about health, participate in activities, and discuss what they like about their health education and what they feel is missing.
- We will not be asking your child any specific questions regarding sexual behavior or their attitudes toward sex, although it may come up as a topic mentioned by a student

- Your child will also be asked to agree to participate, even if you allow your child to participate, they can refuse to participate in the study.

How long will my child participate in the study?

- Your child will participate in the study for one health class period.

How many children are expected to participate in this study?

- Between 200-300 students from grades 5-8 are expected to participate in this study from multiple schools in Lowell.

If I don't want my child to participate in this research, what are the other options?

- If your child does not participate, they will be given an alternative task from their health teacher during the class period.

Can participating in this research hurt my child?

- There is the risk that your child's participation is disclosed. Since the focus group will be conducted in a group setting there is no guarantee that your child's participation will remain confidential once the session has ended.

Are there benefits to my child if they participate in this research?

- There are no direct benefits to your child however, they might learn more about their health needs, share ideas with their peers, and participate in the development of their health education curriculum.

Who can see my child's data?

- Only the researchers will be able to see your child's data. We will store the data securely so no one except the research team can access it. No teachers or other school personnel will have access to their data. The researchers will summarize the data from across many students in multiple schools, so there is no way to identify your child's responses.

- The Institutional Review Board (IRB) at UML, the Office for Human Research Protections (OHRP), may review all the study data. This is to ensure we're following laws and ethical guidelines.
- **How will my child's information be stored and when will it be destroyed?**
- The conversations will be audio recorded. This is necessary for researchers to interpret the results of the study and organize student's responses. Your child's name will be deleted from all records. The recordings will be destroyed after the data is transcribed.
- Researchers will have protected access to data that **excludes** your child's name and identifying information. We may share our findings in publications or presentations, if we do the results will exclude identifying information.
- All audio recorded data will be destroyed once transcripts are created and cleaned, within three months of data collection. Transcripts will be stored indefinitely.

Does it cost anything to participate?

- No, it will not cost anything for your child to participate and your child will not receive any financial incentives for participating.

Are the researchers Mandated Reporters?

We are mandated reporters. This means that if we learn or suspect that a child is being abused or neglected, we're required to report this to the authorities.

Contact information:

For questions about the research, complaints, or problems: Contact [Larissa Gaias 978-934-3950 Larissa_Gaias@uml.edu [Kaitlyn Feeney kaitlyn_feeney@student.uml.edu](mailto:Kaitlyn_Feeney@student.uml.edu) 781-835-5761]

For questions about your child's rights as a research participant, complaints, or problems: Contact the UMass Lowell IRB (Institutional Review Board) at 978-934-4134 or at IRB@uml.edu

Parent/Guardian Signatures:

Please indicate below whether you give your child permission or not to participate in the study. If you choose the first statement, your child will be able to participate in the research.

If you choose the second statement or do not return this form, your child will not be allowed to participate in the research. Remember, your child’s participation is completely voluntary, and you’re free to remove them from the study at any time.

Please return this form to your child’s health teacher, Megan Curran, in the envelope provided. The consent forms will be stored in a locked file cabinet in the teachers’ classrooms.

Mark one of the following statements:

___ My child **has permission** to participate in the study.

___ My child **does not have permission** to participate in the study.

Name of Child (print):

Name of Parent or Guardian (print):

Signature of Parent or Guardian:

Date: _____

Researcher Obtaining Verbal ASSENT:

Name of Researcher:

Date of Verbal Assent: _____ Time: _____

Obtained Verbal Assent via: in-person

