

get your facts right

a guide to
involving young
people in social
research



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“if you’re *interested* in helping people then you would take part and if you’re interested in *knowing* more about yourself it’s down to that”

Why we care

Research is about studying things we don't yet know about or don't fully understand. It can be carried out by observation or through qualitative and/or quantitative methods. We think research is important because: it is good to find new information; it is a great way to find out new things; and you are able to see different opinions from people on the subject. It is also important because the only way for humans to excel and expand our understanding and knowledge is to carry out research and unlock new experiences. It is in human nature to attempt to advance and create new theories. Therefore, research is essential.

Before taking part in research, we think it is important to know what the research will be about and what is going to change as a result of it. Once research is finished, we think we should get feedback from the researchers telling us what they found and if the research was successful or not.

Students at Shawlands Academy

Cath Sinclair, Shawlands Academy

Peter Hopkins, Newcastle University

Research is important because ...

It means that we are contributing and making a difference

It gives us a chance to talk about things we don't normally discuss in class

It gives us a chance to have a say in different things to do with our lives

It can help us understand why we think the way we do and why we agree or not with our friends and with other people in our class

It helps researchers to understand things better

“I think it just makes you *reflect back* and you end up learning more about yourself as a person”

“It would *change people's views* definitely, so that is one way of feedback even if it's not *positive or negative*”

How we want to be treated ...

Students should be provided with information about each research project including why the project is necessary and what they will be asked to do

Students should be provided with some form of written feedback about what researchers find out from doing research in the school.

Students can refuse to participate in research without having to give a reason

Students should receive advance notice about participating in research

Students should have a choice in whether or not they take part in research

Students should only need to take part in research that is relevant to them and should have a say about taking part

Students from any background can participate

Students should have the choice to say yes or no

Students should be offered the opportunity to select a pseudonym (i.e. an alternative name for them so that the research is confidential)

Students should be treated with respect

Students should be seen within minutes and can decide when and if they want to leave whenever they want to

Students should have a say about the topics that are researched

Students should feel equal to researchers

Students deserve a chance to participate if they want to

Students should be treated equally no matter what their race, age, gender etc.

Students should be allowed to miss out questions

Students should be allowed to choose when they want to participate

“Yeah I changed my name to Jim so it was confidential...”

“I think some background information would be good like why is this research happening... What is the gain, what are you hoping to achieve with the information you are getting...”

“Aye, if we don't get feedback then there's no point”

How the research should be conducted...

Research should be directly relevant to young people and should be research that will make a difference

Research should involve students signing a consent form so that they are fully aware of what the research is about and what their participation will involve

Research should anonymise the names of the students involved in order to protect their confidentiality.

Research should be motivated by social justice and promote the common good

Research should be exciting and not be boring

“Why is a focus group better than individual?
Cos you are all giving your opinions rather than just you giving your opinion...
Individual can get kind of awkward...”

“I think it would personally be better to talk to someone individually... I don't know you can give your personal opinion on things but if you have two people... for me I don't know. I am confident...”

“Same with me...”

“I wouldn't go red faced and not talk to this person...”

“I think it's more about the outcome rather than the process itself.”

How researchers should behave

Researchers should listen to students and should be honest

Researchers should have permission from the Council to conduct their research

Researchers should have a background check

Researchers should be friendly and sociable with students

Researchers permitted to work in the school should be university educated

Researchers should be treated equally no matter what their race, age, gender etc.

Researchers should be respectful towards the personal aspects of students' lives and should not invade the privacy of students

Researchers should treat the headteacher and other teachers respectfully

“You know that
it was *worth*
doing and you
didn't waste
an hour ticking
boxes...”