



## Improving STEM for young people

Please note that for most parents/guardians this is a reminder of information we sent when your child was in Year 9. If your child has recently joined the school you will not have seen this letter previously.

### Information for parents and guardians

The Institute for Research in Schools (IRIS) is an education charity that provides opportunities for young people in science, technology, engineering and maths (STEM).

Since 2016, we've worked with hundreds of schools and provided opportunities for thousands of young people to carry out authentic STEM projects. Students have had the chance to empower communities to reduce their carbon footprint, discover new colonies of emperor penguins and identify new sources of cosmic ray radiation. We are committed to helping young people develop a passion for STEM.

Since January 2023 we have been running a project to help improve the experience that young people have in STEM in school. As part of the project, we are carrying out two online surveys with Year 9/10 students to understand how their views, in relation to STEM, change over the course of the year. This information will help us to support schools, students and teachers to improve STEM education across the UK.

This letter outlines the study we will be carrying out, data protection and privacy considerations, and your child's right to opt-out of evaluation activities. We hope that your child will take part but if you or your child are not happy taking part, please complete the opt out form and return it to your child's teacher.

### What will happen in the evaluation?

Students will be asked to complete two online surveys, one in spring 2023 and another in winter/spring 2024. The surveys will ask students about their general attitudes towards STEM, knowledge of STEM careers and pathways, and future ambitions in STEM.

To help us better understand how we can support girls in STEM, students will also be asked their gender at the start of each survey. Students will not have to answer anything if they do not want to.

We will ask your child to create an ID code using the first and third characters of their first name and their day of birth. This is to enable us to link the two surveys together without asking for their full names. Once we have linked the surveys, we will change this ID code to a randomly generated number. We will not be asking students to give us any personal data during the surveys and all responses are completely anonymous. At no point will students be identifiable from the answers they provide to us in the survey.

Your child's school will provide us with anonymised data about each student's pupil premium status and their gender. This data will be provided to us in an anonymised format so we will not be able to link the data to your child.

The lead researcher for IRIS is a member of the British Education Research Association (BERA) and will abide by their guidelines and code of conduct. All information will be held securely and processed in accordance with all relevant regulations (see below).

### Will anyone know that my child has been involved in the evaluation?

Only your child's school and IRIS will know that your child has been involved in the project's evaluation activity. At no point will IRIS collect identifiable information about your child and all responses will be kept confidential and stored securely. Your child's school and teachers will not know what individual children have said in the surveys. IRIS will not identify anyone in the reporting of the project and will only report trends, such as average responses.

IRIS is not collecting or storing identifiable personal information about your child and at any time, you or your child can submit a subject access request to find out: (a) what personal information IRIS is holding



## The STEM Research & Innovation Framework

about them; (b) how IRIS is using that information; (c) who IRIS is sharing that information with; and (d) where IRIS got that data from. A subject access request can be made by contacting IRIS directly by emailing [info@researchinschools.org](mailto:info@researchinschools.org), calling 0203 916 5474 or by writing to The Institute for Research in Schools, 165 Queen's Gate, London, SW7 5HD.

### **Does my child have to take part in the evaluation activities?**

You and your child can decide whether they wish to take part in the evaluation activities. You and your child can opt-out of evaluation activities by completing the form at the end of the letter and returning it to your child's teacher. Once received, any information or records held by IRIS about your child will be deleted.

### **General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR), Data Protection and Privacy**

The controller for this project will be IRIS (Institute for Research in Schools). IRIS respects your privacy and is committed to protecting your child's personal data. The IRIS Data Protection Officer provides oversight of activities involving the processing of personal data and can be contacted at [info@researchinschools.org](mailto:info@researchinschools.org).

This 'local' privacy notice sets out the information that applies to this study. The information that is required to be provided to participants under data protection legislation (GDPR and DPA 2018) is provided across both the 'local' and 'general' privacy notices which can be found on the IRIS website. All information will be held securely and processed in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR).

Data protection legislation requires that we meet certain conditions before we are allowed to use your child's data in the manner described in this notice, including having a lawful basis for the processing. The basis for processing will be as a 'Legitimate interest' whereby the processing of data may be necessary for the purposes of the legitimate interests pursued by IRIS or by a third party, except where such interests are overridden by your interests or by fundamental rights and freedoms which require protection of personal data.

Your child's personal data will be processed so long as it is required for the project. As outlined above, any personal data will be anonymised, and we will only use this anonymised data for the purposes of education, school improvement and educational research. Anonymised group data may also be used in published reports or journals and at conferences.

We have put in place appropriate security measures to prevent data from being accidentally lost, used or accessed in an unauthorised way, altered or disclosed. We have established procedures to deal with any suspected data breach and will notify your child's school and any applicable regulator of a breach where we are legally required to do so.

You have the following rights under data protection legislation to request:

- access to your data;
- correction of your data;
- erasure of your personal data;
- object to processing of your personal data;
- to withdraw consent.

If you have any concerns, or if you would like to contact us about your rights, please contact us at [info@researchinschools.org](mailto:info@researchinschools.org).

### **If I have some questions or need more information, what should I do?**

If you have any questions or need additional information about this project, please contact Dr Ali Rouncefield-Swales by email: [info@researchinschools.org](mailto:info@researchinschools.org).





## The STEM Research & Innovation Framework

**If you do not wish your child to take part in evaluation activities associated with this project, please complete the opt-out form, and return it to your child's teacher. Students may also opt-out by completing this form.**

----- ✂ -----

### Improving STEM for young people: Evaluation Opt-Out

☐

I / my child wishes to opt-out of all evaluation activities associated with the STEM survey.

Child's name:

Child's class:

Signed:

Signed by (Print Name):

Date: