



Life Skills Curriculum Research – Physical Well-being

Dear Parents and Carers,

I'd like to introduce myself to you, my name is Dr Kristy Howells, I'm a Reader at Canterbury Christ Church University and I am an expert in children's physical activity, hydration and diet and physical education. In collaboration with the staff at the Lightyear Federation Schools, I'm undertaking research into the impact of the new curriculum, Lifeskills, that focuses specifically on physical health and mental wealth.

For a video summary of the letter below, please see the link below:

<https://youtu.be/jf60MJb1XyA>

The research project is based within school time, and looks at the teaching and learning that is occurring with the aim of helping the staff to ensure the most effective and efficient curriculum to aid your children's learning. The children will undertake the Lifeskills curriculum as part of their normal learning within the school. Years 1 – 5 will be involved in the first phase of the holistic whole school analysis, with Early Years being planned for in future years.

The research will consider both physical health and mental wealth of the Lifeskills curriculum. For the physical health element of the research, we will be measuring the children's physical activity levels during the school day. This will be measured using a MOKI tracker. A MOKI tracker looks like a watch, but has no face, it is worn round the wrist, a bit like a Fitbit or a Garmin watch if you're familiar with those. The children will put them on when they come into school in the morning (they will be helped with this), and take them off as they leave school. Children's physical activity levels are very sporadic, they move from one level of physical activity to another, so it is very difficult to observe and know what they are doing. Yet the Department of Education requires schools to ensure children have 30 minutes of physical activity a day, this is why we wish to measure this to see what they are able to do within school time and how can we help through the Lifeskills curriculum. In my previous research, (Howells and Coppinger, 2022) we found that children went beyond the 30 minutes a day and the boys in key stage 2 were able to actually reach 60 minutes a day of moderate to vigorous physical activity, which is what the Chief Medical Officer recommends for the whole day. The physical activity measurements will occur across the year, in each term, but only for a week at a time.

The other part of the research is to look at mental wealth. In terms of measuring this, we will be using a short scale questionnaire called the Happiness Scale, these were used within the Active Lives Children and Young People Survey devised by Sport England who have used happiness as a method to look at wellbeing. In their 2021 Active Lives report

they found that children who were more active were happier, we wish to see if this is the case with the children, and how their physical activity levels match their happiness levels, and if more physical activity interventions are needed. In our previous research (Howells and Bowen, 2016) we found that physical activity interventions considerably increased children's wellbeing, this research has been cited globally as ways forwards of teaching and learning within primary school settings. The happiness scale will be repeated throughout the year, to see the impact of the curriculum.

I'm really excited about collaborating with the Lightyear Federation schools and looking forward to examining how the teaching of the Lifeskills curriculum can support the children's learning.

Please note there will be no judgement on your child's physical activity levels or happiness levels, they are not being tested in that sense. The key is how can the new curriculum be used to support the children's learning to enhance physical activity and happiness levels, and that we don't know unless we measure. All data will be kept confidentially and in line with GDPR regulations.

If you DO NOT wish your child to be part of the research, please complete the survey monkey below by Friday 4th November and your child's data will not be considered within the analysis. Please note that you do not have to complete any survey or permission slip if you are happy for your child to take part.

<https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/CYC7GZ6>

I'm grateful for your support.

If you wish to contact me at all, please do so on my email address: kristy.howells@canterbury.ac.uk

Dr Kristy Howells
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