

Participant Information Sheet

PLYTIME Learning Research Project

What is PLYTIME Learning?

PLYTIME Learning is an online learning platform that helps students improve using their new concept, FOCUS Tutoring.

FOCUS Tutoring enables students to access personalised questions through games, review their answers, watch help videos for each type of question and flag for tutor assistance if needed. At least once per week, the student will then attend an online 1-to-1 video enabled Focus 15[®] tutoring session with their dedicated tutor - all Focus 15[®] tutoring sessions are designed around optimal attention spans of 15 minutes.

PLYTIME Learning's mission is to improve effectiveness and affordability of online learning.

What is the purpose of the research project?

The purpose of this Research Project is to analyse the impact of the length and frequency of tutoring sessions. Primarily we will try to understand whether 3 x 15 minute Focus 15[®] tutoring sessions are more effective than 1 x 45 minute tutoring sessions in terms of student attainment.

Why has my child been invited to take part?

Your child has been invited to take part because they are in year 4 or 5. We are interested in investigating the impact of the two types of tutoring sessions (3 x 15 minutes 1 x 45 minutes) on mathematics attainment in year 4 and year 5 children.

Do I have to take part?

It is up to you and your child to decide. This information sheet describes the project to you and explains how we will collect, store and analyse the data we collect about your child. You are free to withdraw at any time, without giving a reason. If you decide that you would like your child to take part you can sign up through the PLYTIME website and complete the online consent form. You will then receive instructions from PLYTIME about the next steps. If you decide at any point during the project that you would like your child to withdraw from the project, you can do this by cancelling your PLYTIME subscription. Your child will then be withdrawn automatically from the study and any data collected from them already will be removed from the study and safely deleted.

What will I be asked to do?

Your child will be asked to complete an online test at the beginning of the project to assess their current level of mathematics attainment. This will take 20 to 30 minutes. They will then be randomly allocated to one of three groups:

Group A: Children in this group will be automatically allocated to their dedicated online tutor at a time of their choosing. They will be asked to attend 3 x 15 minute online one-to-one tutoring sessions each week for 6 weeks.

Group B: Children in this group will be automatically allocated to their dedicated online tutor at a time of their choosing. They will be asked to attend one 45 minute online one-to-one tutoring session a week for 6 weeks.

Group C: Children in this group have been allocated to the control group. This means that they will not receive any tutoring during the research project, but they will receive a voucher so that they can receive 6 weeks of free tutoring after the research project has finished. The reason that we include a control group is so that we can compare the progress of children receiving tutoring to the progress of children who are not receiving tutoring.

If your child is in group A or group B and they miss a week of their tutoring (e.g. due to illness or holiday), this can be picked up the following week (so long as sufficient notice is given). The total length of the tutoring trial will therefore be 6 to 7 weeks.

Alongside the tutoring, the students will have access to an online challenge game to help them to practice the skills that they are developing within the tutoring sessions and move through the curriculum. Students will be encouraged to access the game independently in between sessions. This game generates ongoing performance scores which will also be collected by PLYTIME to provide another measure of progress in mathematics. Group C will not have access to this game until after the research project. They will gain access to this at a later date, if they choose to use their voucher to take up the free tutoring offer (see above).

At the end of this 6-7 week period, Children in groups A, B and C will all be asked to complete a different version of the mathematics test that they completed at the beginning so that we can measure their progress.

The tutoring is likely to take place sometime between April-July, but if we are unable to recruit enough students in time, we will need to delay the beginning of the tutoring until September to avoid disruptions due to summer holidays.

Are there any risks if my child participates?

There is a small risk that your child may become bored, tired or distressed when engaging in the tests or the tutoring sessions. However, we have taken steps to ensure that the tests and tutoring sessions are designed to be appropriate for children in years 4 and 5. The tests and session content are designed to match with the kinds of learning that children engage in at school. The tests will take no longer than 30 minutes and the challenges within PLYTIME can last from 5 to 15 minutes. Tutors have been trained to look out for signs that a child is getting tired or becoming uncomfortable or distressed and will ask the child if they would like to stop the test/session if this is the case and will let the parents know. All tutors have been through PLYTIME's approval processes and have enhanced DBS clearance (screening checks required for people working with children and young adults).

Are there any advantages if I participate?

Yes, if your child participates in the research project, they will receive 6 weeks of free tutoring, plus 24/7 access to personalised maths content and learning support that is built into the PLYTIME platform. The platform has specifically been designed to support children's progress in mathematics in a more effective and affordable manner. To encourage commitment to the Research, parents will be asked to contribute an initial sign-up fee of £29 at the beginning of the trial, which will be fully refunded at the end of the project if the child has completed all the tutoring sessions as well as the tests at the beginning and the end of the project. The child will also receive an Amazon voucher up to £20 (passed on via the parents) at the end of the project if they have completed all the tutoring sessions as well as the tests at the beginning and the end of the project.

Informed consent

If you would like your child to take part, we would like you to share the child information sheet with them and ask them if they would like to take part. You will be asked to complete an online consent form on the PLYTIME webpage.

What information about me will you collect and why?

PLYTIME will collect the following data for the research project:

- Test scores at the beginning and end of the project
- Performance scores from the online maths challenges
- Child's name

- Gender, date of birth, child's school (which are account set up fields used by PLYTIME solely to understand the impact of their marketing efforts)
- Child's year group to ensure the questions are targeted at the right level
- Parent's name, phone number, email address (to facilitate arrangement of the tutoring sessions and to have a record of consent) and post code (which is used by PLYTIME solely to understand the impact of their marketing efforts).

How will my information be stored and how will you look after it?

The test scores will be collected using the online tool Flexiquiz and the maths game performance scores will be collected within the PLYTIME digital tutoring system. The demographic data (name, date of birth etc listed above) will be collected via the PLYTIME website. All data will be downloaded and stored on One Drive (a secure, password protected file system) by PLYTIME. All test scores will be anonymised (they won't have the children's names attached to them). The only data that will be shared with anyone other than PLYTIME is the anonymised test and game performance scores which will be shared with Manchester Metropolitan University, MMU.

How will you use my information?

MMU will analyse the difference in scores between the three groups (A, B and C). PLYTIME will use the pupil and parents' names and contact details to facilitate use of the platform and resolve any issues as they occur. The PLYTIME tutor assigned to your child will be only be given their first name, age, year group and will have access to the performance data and question responses within the platform. All communication with the tutor is via the platform Messaging system, which is monitored for safeguarding reasons. No personal or private information is shared between tutors, students and parents at any time.

Will my data be sent anywhere else, or shared with other people or organisations?

The data will not be shared with anyone other than PLYTIME or MMU staff and will only be shared with them in the way that is set out above.

When will you destroy my information?

All data will be stored after the project has finished and the data has been analysed (within three months of the end of the tutoring sessions). If a child withdraws from the project by cancelling their subscription before they complete post-tutoring test, then all data collected in relation to that child will be safely destroyed. If the child has already completed the post-tutoring test and the data has already been anonymised then it will not be possible to delete the test scores (because we will not know which ones belong to that child), but we will destroy all personal data.

Data Protection Law

The way we look after your information is ruled by UK law. Under UK law, we need to have a very good reason for using your information (this is called a 'lawful basis').

You have the right to make choices about your information under UK law. If you have any questions or would like to ask us to do something with your information, you can ask the researcher or a parent or guardian, or someone else at the University. Contact details are shown towards the bottom of this document.

You can stop being a part of the study at any time, without giving a reason. You can ask us to delete your data at any time, but it might not always be possible. If you ask us to delete information before your child takes the post-tutoring test, we will make sure this is done. If you ask us to delete data after this point, we might not be able to. If your data is anonymised (where we take out your name and any other information that lets us know the information is about you), we will not be able to delete it, because we will not know which data is yours.

PLYTIME is the Controller for this information and is responsible for looking after your data and using it in line with the requirements of the data protection legislation applicable in the UK.

MMU will act as Data Processor of this. They will process anonymised data only.

What will happen to the results of the research study?

The results of the study will be used to inform the structure of the tutoring that PLYTIME provide to their customers, and to inform marketing materials (e.g. advising parents on which tutoring package to purchase). We might also publish an article in an academic journal and/or professional magazine and/or give presentations at conferences to share the results with the other researchers and teachers. We would only include anonymised data in any articles or presentations.

Who has reviewed this research project?

Presentation The research has been reviewed by the Faculty of Health and Education Ethics Committee at MMU.

Who do I contact if I have concerns about this study or I wish to complain?

If you have any concerns about the research, please contact Dr Steph Ainsworth, Principal Investigator at MMU on s.ainsworth@mmu.ac.uk, or Co-Investigator, Ian McCartney, CEO of PLYTIME on ian.mccartney@plytime.com

If you have any concerns regarding the ethical procedures adopted during this research, please contact the Faculty Head of Research Ethics and Governance, Dr Claire Fox at FOHE-ethics@mmu.ac.uk, or telephone 0161 247 2179, or in writing

to: Faculty of Health and Education, Manchester Metropolitan University, Brooks Building, 53 Bonsall Street, Manchester, M15 6GX.

If you have any concerns regarding personal collected from you, please contact Ian McCartney on ian.mccartney@plytime.com. The contact details for the data protection team at MMU are also provided here: dataprotection@mmu.ac.uk

Tel: 0161 247 3331 Legal Services, All Saints Building, Manchester Metropolitan University, Manchester, M15 6BH

Manchester Metropolitan Data Protection Officer

UK Information Commissioner's Office

You have the right to complain directly to the Information Commissioner's Office if you would like to complain about how we process your personal data:

<https://ico.org.uk/global/contact-us/>

THANK YOU FOR CONSIDERING PARTICIPATING IN THIS PROJECT