**Parent/Carer Information Sheet**

**Study Title**: A mixed methods study exploring perfectionism and flourishing in secondary school students

**Researcher**: Lauren Holmes

**ERGO number:** 48076

Dear Sir/Madam,

I am a Trainee Educational Psychologist studying for the Doctorate in Educational Psychology at the University of Southampton. As part of the doctorate, I am conducting a thesis exploring perfectionism and flourishing (i.e. high well-being) in secondary school students. I am writing to you as I would like to invite your child to participate in my research.

Please carefully read the information below about the study before deciding whether you consent to your child’s participation in the research. Please contact me if anything is unclear or you would like more information. If you **do not** want your child to participate, please sign the opt-out consent form at the end of this letter and return it to [named member of staff or school office] by \_\_/\_\_/\_\_\_\_.

Yours sincerely,

Lauren Holmes,

Trainee Educational Psychologist

[L.M.Holmes@soton.ac.uk](mailto:L.M.Holmes@soton.ac.uk)

**What is the research about?**

Research suggests that there are different forms of perfectionism. Some perfectionists gain great satisfaction from setting high standards and striving to reach these. For these people, perfectionism may be helpful. Other perfectionists may never feel happy with their performance and experience frustration when they cannot reach their high standards. For these people, perfectionism may be less helpful.

The aim of this part of the study is to explore whether there are differences in well-being between students (in Years 9 and 10) displaying traits of different forms of perfectionism and non-perfectionism.

**Why has my child been asked to participate?**

You are receiving this letter because the school has agreed for the research to be carried out in the school and your child is in Year 9 or 10.

**What will happen if my child takes part?**

If you consent to your child’s participation in the study, your child will be invited to complete a survey which includes demographic questions and two questionnaires (one measuring well-being/flourishing and another measuring perfectionism). The survey will be completed during a data collection session with groups of students during normal school hours. Students will either be asked to complete an online survey on a computer or a paper version of this survey. The data collection session will last approximately 45 minutes. The survey itself should take approximately 20 minutes. The researcher will use the remaining time to explain the study to students and gain their assent, to allocate student identification codes, to ensure that students can access the survey and to distribute debriefing forms. Study information will be provided to your child and their assent to participate will be sought before beginning the survey. Afterwards, your child will be given debriefing information and asked to indicate whether they would like to enter a prize draw to win one of five £20 Amazon vouchers.

Your child will also be asked if they would be interested in being interviewed in another phase of the study taking place later in the year. If your child is selected to take part in an interview, you will receive a separate letter providing further information about this and your consent for your child’s participation will be sought.

**Are there any benefits in my child taking part?**

There may be no direct benefit to your child. However, the research may help to develop understanding of how perfectionism relates to well-being. This may help researchers to think about how school staff and other professionals can support students whose perfectionism is posing a challenge to their well-being.

**Are there any risks involved?**

There are few risks in this study. However, as the questionnaires require students to reflect on their well-being and attitudes towards themselves and their performance, there is a small chance that some students may experience some uncomfortable emotions. To minimise this risk, your child will be informed that they may withdraw their survey participation at any time during its completion. After completing the survey, your child will be provided with debriefing information which will signpost them to support services which can be accessed should they experience any negative feelings following participation. Your child will be provided with the name of a staff member who they can speak with about any issues and will also be reminded that they can speak with other trusted adults at school or at home. If I feel that your child is exhibiting signs of distress during the survey, they will be encouraged to stop participation and be made aware of the sources of support outlined in the debriefing information. I will also make a relevant school staff member aware if your child’s questionnaire scores are a cause for concern so that they may follow this up according to school policy. Should any safeguarding concerns arise during the research, I will report these to the school’s Designated Safeguarding Lead directly so that they can follow these up according to the school’s safeguarding policy. I have undergone an enhanced DBS check.

**What data will be collected and how will this be stored?**

The survey will collect students’ responses to the perfectionism and well-being/flourishing questionnaires and some demographic information. Schools will also be asked to provide some additional achievement related data (actual or predicted grades across a range of subjects). Information will be collected on students’ age, year-group, sex, grades and ethnicity so that the sample of students can be described. Please note that information on ethnicity is classed as special category data according to data protection. Information on students’ age, year-group, grades and sex will also be collected to investigate whether the study results differ on these variables.

**All of this data will be anonymised.** Each student will be allocated a unique identification code and school code which they will need to enter onto their online/paper survey. I will use these codes when liaising with the school contact so that the school can identify students who are to be invited to interviews, who have won Amazon vouchers, whose survey scores are a cause for concern or who have requested for their data to be withdrawn. The list of names and codes will also be used so that school staff have a record of which pupils have participated so that they can receive summaries of the research findings. I will not take the list of unique identification codes and student names out of the school, so by itself, the data collected and taken away will not contain any means of identifying any individual pupil. The school contact will be asked to store this in a locked cabinet in an office in the school so that it can only by accessed by them. They will not have access to the data collected by me. The school contact will be asked to destroy the list of unique identification codes and student names when no further contact with students is required.

Data collected on academic achievement will be entered onto a spreadsheet on password-protected computer along with pupils’ unique identification codes while I am on the school premises.

If survey data is collected online, this will be done via the university’s secure software for distributing online surveys. Data from the survey will be encrypted before it is stored in a database server in the university. This data will be stored on the server for 90 days before being deleted. After each day of data collection, I will download the data as a CSV file and import and save this on a main spreadsheet on a password-protected computer. Data collected through paper surveys will be entered onto this same spreadsheet. Only I will have access to this main spreadsheet. However, supervisors/ advisors from the university may be allowed to see this when assisting with data analysis.

Hard copies of students’ assent forms will be stored in a locked container in my house.

All assent forms and survey data will be destroyed 10 years after the research has been completed, in line with the university’s research data management policy.

**Will my child’s participation be confidential?**

Confidentiality cannot be guaranteed in the survey group data collection session (as students will be able to see who else is taking part). However, all students will be asked to respect each other’s privacy and to not discuss the study outside of the research environment. I will take the measures outlined in the above question to keep your child’s participation and the information collected about them during the course of the research confidential so that it is not shared with anyone outside of the research team. Codes will be used to reduce the risk that your child could be identified. However, it should be noted that before participation, your child will be told that if I have any concerns about any student’s well-being or safety based on their survey responses, these will need to be raised with a relevant member of school staff.

Only members of the research team and responsible members of the University of Southampton may be given access to data about participants for monitoring purposes and/or to carry out an audit of the study to ensure that the research is complying with applicable regulations. Individuals from regulatory authorities (people who check that we are carrying out the study correctly) may require access to participants’ data. All of these people have a duty to keep participants’ information strictly confidential, though since this data will be anonymised, they will not be able to identify any individual student from their contact with this data.

**Does my child have to take part?**

No, it is entirely up to you to decide whether your child will take part. If you **do not** agree to your child taking part, you will need to sign the opt-out form. Before taking part in the research, your child will also need to indicate that they are happy to participate by completing an assent form.

**What happens if I change my mind?**

You have the right to change your mind and withdraw your child’s participation without any reason and without your rights being affected at any time before data collection begins and up to 5 working days after the survey has been completed by emailing me at [L.M.Holmes@soton.ac.uk](mailto:L.M.Holmes@soton.ac.uk). Any data collected up to this point will be destroyed. Your email to me will then be permanently deleted so that no record of your email or address will be kept.

Before completing the survey, students will be informed that they can withdraw their participation and their data at any time during its completion by choosing not to submit the survey. After submitting the survey, they can withdraw their data up to 5 working days afterwards by emailing me. All of their data will then be destroyed. Again, their email (with their email address) will then be deleted.

**What will happen to the results of the research?**

The project will be written up into a thesis which will be available online. The project may be written up for a journal and published. Personal details will remain strictly confidential. Research findings made available in any reports or publications will not include information that can directly identify your child.

**Where can I get more information?**

If you have any questions about the study or would like further information, please contact me at [L.M.Holmes@soton.ac.uk](mailto:L.M.Holmes@soton.ac.uk). Alternatively, you can contact my supervisor, Dr Brettany Hartwell, at b.hartwell@soton.ac.uk.

**What happens if there is a problem?**

If you have a concern about any aspect of this study, please contact me at [L.M.Holmes@soton.ac.uk](mailto:L.M.Holmes@soton.ac.uk) or my supervisor, Dr Brettany Hartwell, at [b.hartwell@soton.ac.uk](mailto:b.hartwell@soton.ac.uk). We will do our best to answer your questions.

If you remain unhappy or have a complaint about any aspect of this study, please contact the University of Southampton Research Integrity and Governance Manager (023 8059 5058, [rgoinfo@soton.ac.uk](mailto:rgoinfo@soton.ac.uk)).

**Data Protection Privacy Notice**

The University of Southampton conducts research to the highest standards of research integrity. If the survey contains personal data which could identify your child then:  
   
1. The University of Southampton is the ‘Data Controller’ for this study, which means that we are responsible for looking after your child’s information and using it properly.  
2. The University of Southampton will keep identifiable information about you only for as long as it is necessary to verify and defend, when required, the process and outcomes of the research. Any link between your child and their information will be removed as quickly as is feasible, provided your research is not impacted as a result.  
3. We will only use your child’s data/information as set out in this Participant Information Sheet and in accordance with our Data Protection Policy and our Privacy Notice for Research Participants.  
4. We will not do anything with your child’s personal data that you would not reasonably expect."  
   
If you have any questions about how your child’s personal data is used, or wish to exercise any of your rights, please consult the University’s data protection webpage where you can make a request using our online form. If you need further assistance, please contact the University’s Data Protection Officer ([data.protection@soton.ac.uk](mailto:data.protection@soton.ac.uk)).

To reduce the risk of participants being identifiable, unique identification codes will be used instead of participant names. The list of participant codes and names will be securely stored in school and will only be accessed by the school contact. I will use these codes when liaising with the school contact so that the school can identify students who are to be invited to interviews, who have won Amazon vouchers or whose survey scores are a cause for concern. The list of names will also be used so that school staff have a record of which pupils have participated so that they can receive summaries of the research findings. The school contact will be asked to destroy the list of unique identification codes and participant names when no further contact with participants is required so that there will be no way of linking participants with their data.

It would still be possible for me to link students participating in the interviews with their data, however I will keep this information confidential.

**Thank you.**

Thank you for taking the time to read the information sheet and considering your child’s participation in the research.