



Title of Project: *Tackling Plant Blindness Through Art-Science Public Engagement*

PARENT/GUARDIAN INFORMATION SHEET

Your child is being invited to take part in a research project. Before you decide and your child decide, it is important for you both to understand why the project is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully and discuss it with others if you wish. Ask us if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information. A child friendly information sheet is also available to help your child decide.

1. What is the purpose of the project?

Mindful Garden is a creative public engagement project that introduces children and families to the science of plants (botany) through hands-on, sensory, and artistic activities. The project aims to make plant science more accessible and engaging, particularly for groups who may have limited exposure to science education.

As part of the project, participants will be invited to take part in a workshop and exhibition and give feedback through short surveys. Workshops and exhibitions will take place in familiar public settings such as museums, gardens, and community venues. Activities include exploring plants, creating botanical art-science, and learning about endangered medicinal plants and their role in biodiversity and climate change.

The project is part of a PhD research study and aims to develop a framework for inclusive, creative science engagement that supports environmental awareness and learning.

This project is organised by Liverpool John Moores University and by the Vice Chancellor PhD Scholarship Award.

2. Why has my child been invited to take part?

Your child has been invited to take part because they are aged between 6 and 15 and are attending or participating in a workshop, exhibition, or public engagement activity linked to the *Mindful Garden* project. Your child may have been identified through a school, community group, museum, or public event, or you may have responded to a poster, email, or social media post about the project.

We are inviting children and young people to take part so we can understand how creative, hands-on activities help them learn about plants, science, and nature.

Your child should only take part if the following conditions apply:

- They are aged between 6 and 15 years old
- They are attending a participating event or workshop
- You (as their parent/guardian) are happy for them to take part
- They are happy to take part and give their assent

They must not take part if the following conditions apply:

- They do not want to take part
- You do not give permission for them to participate
- They have specific sensory or accessibility needs that cannot be supported in the current setting (though we will do our best to accommodate all needs where possible)

We expect to involve approximately **100+ children and young people** across various events and locations.

3. Does my child have to take part?

No. You and your child can ask questions about the project before deciding whether to take part. If you do not agree to their involvement or if your child does not want to take part, that is OK. Your child can stop being part of the project at any time, without giving a reason. You may withdraw your child, or your child may withdraw, from the project by contacting **Samantha Cooper s.cooper1@2022.ljmu.ac.uk**.

4. What will happen to my child if they take part?

If you agree for your child to take part, and they are happy to join in, they will be invited to participate in a creative, hands-on workshop activity as well take part in an exhibition to show their work produced in the workshop. Parents are welcome to attend the activities and be present throughout. Observations will be conducted in workshops and exhibitions. The researcher will observe interactions and engagement levels during workshops, noting general behaviours and responses. These observations will be via written notes that will not include identifiers. No covert observation will take place.

What will the activity involve?

Your child will:

- Take part in a fun plant-based workshop which will explore the importance of medicinal plants in pharmaceuticals, conservation work (how and why we preserve plants for science) with links to historical archives.
- Have their artwork (which is made in the workshop) included in a public exhibition (with your consent)
- Be invited to attend an exhibition private view event hosted at the workshop location. This may be at a botanical garden, museum, community centre.
- Answer a few simple questions via 3 questionnaires (one completed before the workshop; one completed after the workshop, and one completed during the exhibition viewing if you attend the private view event). The questions will include demographics, prior botanical knowledge, new learnt knowledge, and thoughts and feelings of the event. All questions are optional. There will be adult support to help your child, and parents can provide assistance.

Where and when will it happen?

Activities will take place at partner venues such as museums, gardens, schools, or community centres. Each session will last around 1 – 3 hours.

Consent process

You will be asked to sign a consent form (opt-in).

Your child will also be asked to give their assent (agreement) before taking part. Please discuss the project with your child using the child friendly information sheet before the event. Please ensure your child is fully informed before signing their assent. Your child can stop at any time during the event if they change their mind.

How long will they be involved?

This is a one-time research activity, however, if your child's work is included in an exhibition, we may contact you to share updates (only if you consent to this).

5. Will my child be photographed or video/audio recorded and how will the recorded media be used?

We may take photographs during the project to capture moments of the activities. These may include images of your child's hands while they are working, or general shots of the group.

You and your child are free to decline photography. If you do not want your child to be photographed just let us know, your child can still fully take part in the project without being included in any photographs.

If you do give consent, and your child agrees, identifying photographs of your child may be used and in:

- The final project report
- Public exhibitions or displays
- The project website or social media
- Academic presentations or publications

Your child's name will never be used with any images. However, please be aware that even without a name, there is a small chance someone might recognise your child. If you have any concerns or would like to place restrictions on how images are used, please speak to the investigator.

All media will be stored securely and used only with your permission, as confirmed in the consent form.

6. Are there any possible disadvantages or risks in taking part?

Taking part in this project is not expected to cause your child any harm or discomfort. The activities are designed to be fun, creative, and similar to what your child might already do in school or community settings such as drawing, exploring plants, and answering simple questions.

However, as with any group activity, there is a small chance your child may feel shy, tired, or unsure about participating. If this happens, they will be supported by the facilitator and can take a break or stop at any time. No child will be made to do anything they are uncomfortable with.

If your child becomes upset or experiences any distress during or after the activity, please let the investigator know. We will do our best to support them and ensure their wellbeing.

There are no physical procedures, no ingestion of substances, and no sensitive or personal questions involved in this project.

All activities will follow current health and safety and safeguarding guidelines.

7. Are there any benefits in taking part?

There will be no direct or personal benefit to your child from taking part in this project. However, we hope that they will enjoy the creative and hands-on activities, and that the experience will be a positive and engaging way to learn more about plants and science.

More broadly, the findings from this project will help us understand how to design better public engagement activities that make science more accessible and enjoyable for children and families. Your child's participation will contribute to research that may benefit others in the future by improving science education and awareness of environmental issues.

8. What personal data will be collected and what will happen to this?

The information your child gives us, or that we collect from them, from which they can be identified (e.g. from identifiers such as their name, date of birth, audio recording etc.), is known as personal data. Your child's participation in this project will involve the collection/use of personal data.

We will keep all information about your child safe and secure. The investigator will have access to some or all of your child's personal data. You can object to our processing of your child's data and you have the right to ask us to access, remove, change or delete data we hold about your child for the purposes of the study. We might not always be able to do this if it means we cannot use your child's data to do the project. If so, we will tell you why we cannot do this.

The project data collected from your child that is considered personal data includes ...

- A record of consent/assent (which will include your and your child's names)
- The child's name on the questionnaires to link them between activities
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- The child's name on the questionnaires to link them between activities
- Your contact details including, name, email address and postcode (if you agree to be contacted)
- Your child's creative work (e.g. drawings or written responses)
- Photographs (only with your consent)

We will use a code or pseudonym to label your child's data so that they **cannot** be directly identified in any reports or publications. For example, your child might be referred to as "Participant 1" or "Child A."

If your child is recorded (e.g. in a photo), and you have given permission, these may be used in public exhibitions, reports, or online platforms related to the project. Your child's name will never be used with any images or recordings.

Once we have finished the study, we will keep some of the data so we can check the results. Identifiable project data will be stored securely at LJMU for the duration of the project – unless there is no need for the data to be identifiable, at which point it will be made anonymous. Other project data (including consent forms) or project data that needs to be identifiable, will be stored securely at LJMU usually for three years after publication or public release of the work – maybe longer as determined by funding after publication or public release of the work.

Limits to confidentiality

- Please note that assurances on confidentiality will be strictly adhered to unless evidence of wrongdoing or potential harm is uncovered. In such cases the University may be obliged to contact relevant statutory bodies/agencies.

9. Data Protection

Liverpool John Moores University (LJMU) is the Data Controller for this project. This means LJMU is responsible for deciding how your child's personal data is used and for keeping it safe. The University will process your child's data for the purpose of this research project, which is considered a task carried out in the public interest.

For more information about your child's rights, please see the LJMU Privacy Notice for Research Participants:

<https://www.ljmu.ac.uk/legal/privacy-notice-and-cookies/external-stakeholders-privacy-policy/research-participants-privacy-notice>

If you have any questions about how your child's data is used, you can contact the LJMU Data Protection Officer, Tina Forrester, at DPO@ljmu.ac.uk.

10. Who has reviewed this project?

This Project has received a favourable ethics opinion from an LJMU Research Ethics Committee. Research Ethics Committee Reference Number: 260127LJMUREC319

11. Who is funding the project?

This project is funded by LJMU Vice Chancellor PhD Studentship Award. In the event of the development of a new product or service there will be no personal financial gain.

12. Whom do I contact if I have a concern about the project or I wish to complain?

If you have a concern about any aspect of this project, please contact *Mark Roughley*, and we will do our best to answer your query. You should expect a reply within 10 working days. If you remain unhappy or wish to make a formal complaint, please contact the Chair of the Research Ethics Committee at Liverpool John Moores University who will seek to resolve the matter as soon as possible:

Chair, Liverpool John Moores University Research Ethics Committee; Email: FullReviewUREC@ljmu.ac.uk; Tel: 0151 231 2121; Research Innovation Services, Liverpool John Moores University, Exchange Station, Liverpool L2 2QP

13. Further information and contact details

If you would like to discuss the research with someone beforehand (or if you have questions afterwards), please contact:

Principal Investigator: *Samantha Cooper*

LJMU Postgraduate Research Student

LJMU Email address: s.cooper1@2022.ljmu.ac.uk

LJMU School/Faculty: Liverpool School of Art and Creative Industries/Faculty of Society and Culture

LJMU Central telephone number: 0151 231 2121

Supervisor Name: *Mark Roughley*

Supervisor's LJMU Email address: M.A.Roughley@ljmu.ac.uk

Please consider retaining a copy of this information sheet for your future reference.