

Grassroots trial: evaluation of an anti-conflict intervention

Information for Parents/Carers

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What is this about?

The Behavioural Insights Team (BIT) is leading Grassroots, a pupil-led programme designed to build positive social relations in school. In a trial in the USA, the intervention reduced the number of pupil conflict-related disciplinary events in schools by up to 60%. A team from IOE, UCL's Faculty of Education and Society, (IOE), is evaluating a version of this programme in England and Wales, and this is being jointly funded by the Youth Endowment Fund (YEF) and Education Endowment Foundation (EEF). The project aims to reduce bullying and conflict in schools and improve pupil attendance through empowering a group of young people to make positive social change in their school. This is a large-scale trial involving over 100 secondary schools. A school's participation is an indication of their interest in supporting research on what works to improve schools, not an indication that the school has a problem with attendance, bullying or conflict. The evaluation has been reviewed and approved by the IOE Research Ethics Committee. The Grassroots intervention has been reviewed and approved by the BIT Research Ethics Committee. The headteacher of your child's school has agreed that the school will take part in the evaluation.

What will the project look like?

The project is investigating the impact (effects) of the Grassroots programme on bullying, conflict and attendance in schools. The evaluation is a type of study called a randomised controlled trial. This means that some schools taking part will receive the Grassroots programme and others will not. The decision about whether a school receives the programme is made at random. Researchers will compare outcomes including bullying, conflict and attendance for pupils in schools that receive the intervention and those that do not. That will help those researchers understand whether Grassroots works or not.

The project will involve Year 7-9 pupils (and a small number of Year 10 pupils) in around 100 schools, starting in September 2023 and continuing until Summer 2024.

If your child's school is selected to receive the intervention:

1. A group of approximately thirty pupils in years 7-9 will be selected to work together (facilitated by a trained, DBS-checked member of BIT), to identify any problems they see with how pupils interact at their school, and to devise and implement solutions (such as modelling prosocial behaviours, sharing positive messages using posters and social media, and sharing wristbands with students for friendly or conflict-mitigating behaviour). This group is referred to as the 'seed group'. A small number of Year 10 pupils will occasionally join the seed group to support in an advisory capacity.
2. The Years 7-9 pupils in this seed group will be selected using the results of the Grassroots survey. In this survey, the pupils select (from a drop-down list of names) which other pupils they have chosen to spend time with in the last few weeks: the survey responses, along with demographic information, is used to select a group of pupils who will, between them, be able to represent the whole student body.
3. If your child is selected to be invited to the seed group, BIT will write to you again to explain what participating would entail and to confirm that you are happy for your child to be involved.

If your child's school does not receive the Grassroots programme, then it will continue with its usual activities.

What does this mean for me as a parent/carers?

As part of measuring the impact of Grassroots, pupils in years 7-9 will be asked to complete a short survey in autumn 2023, and another survey in summer 2024. The surveys will ask pupils about their behaviour and that of their peers at school (including bullying), and each will take about 30 minutes to complete. IOE is collecting this information for the purposes of the research project, and the surveys will take place whether your child's school receives the Grassroots

programme or not. Pupils in years 7-9 will also be invited to complete the short online Grassroots survey (described above) at the same time as the evaluation survey in autumn 2023.

Some schools that receive the Grassroots intervention will be invited to be case study schools. Researchers will visit case study schools to talk to participating pupils and adults and find out more about how the Grassroots intervention is working. If your child's school is a case study school we will write to you again with more information before any visit takes place.

IOE will ask all schools to share the names, dates of birth, year and tutor group, sex, free school meal eligibility and ethnicity of their year 7-9 pupils. IOE will ask all schools to share reports of disciplinary incidents for Key Stage 3, to see if the intervention has reduced the number of incidents of conflict between pupils. IOE will also ask schools to share year 7-9 pupils' UPNs (Unique Pupil Numbers) to allow us to link the data provided by schools with administrative data held by the Department for Education in England (in the National Pupil Database, NPD). IOE will share your child's data with the DFE in order to access your child's school attendance data for the school years 2022-2023, 2023-24, 2024-25 and 2025-26 and their SEND data from the NPD. IOE will analyse data in a pseudonymised form so your child cannot be identified by researchers during analysis. For the purposes of research, the data of pupils in years 7-9 will be archived: this involves sharing the identities of the pupils who participated with the Department for Education, and transferring the evaluation data from the Grassroots trial to the YEF archive at the Office for National Statistics. All information which would identify individual pupils within the data will be removed and replaced with a unique pupil matching reference number ('pseudonymised') before it is archived. Further matching of pseudonymised data to the National Pupil Database and other administrative data may take place during subsequent research. Please find more details in the 'Data Protection Privacy Notice' below.

IOE will share your child's name, year and tutor group, sex, date of birth and ethnicity with BIT so that they can administer the Grassroots survey, and so they can ensure the seed group invitees are representative of their school. IOE will share the pupil disciplinary incident data from all schools (in pseudonymised form, wherever feasible) with BIT for categorisation and the analysis of trends. BIT may share the data it collects with researchers at its parent company, Nesta, to assist BIT in its work. BIT will share the data from the Grassroots survey (which pupils your child has chosen to spend time with over the past few weeks), and the process by which seed group pupils have been selected, with IOE for the purposes of the evaluation.

No information that can identify individual children will be made available to anyone outside the delivery team from BIT and its parent company, Nesta, the evaluation team from IOE, the Department for Education and your child's school. Your child's data will be treated with the strictest confidence and will be kept behind secure firewalls. Neither your child's name nor the name of the school will be used in any report arising from the research, and no information that could otherwise identify your child will be made public.

Because we (YEF, EEF, IOE and BIT) are doing this research to improve understanding about what works in promoting positive social relations in schools, **if you are happy for information about your child to be used in this research project you do not need to do anything.** Thank you for your help with this research, your support is much appreciated.

This is an important project that we think will help improve young people's experience of school. We expect that your child will enjoy their involvement in the project and they will be free to withdraw at any time. If you would prefer that your child **NOT** be involved in any evaluation surveys, or their data not to be processed as above, please complete the enclosed form and return it to your child's school by 15th September 2023.

If you have any questions you would like to ask about data processing or the evaluation, please contact Becky Taylor at IOE by email at IOE.grassroots@ucl.ac.uk. If you have any questions about the Grassroots intervention, please contact grassroots@bi.team.

This research has been fully approved by IOE Research Ethics Committee and by UCL Data Protection.

Research Ethics Committee Approval Number: REC 1773

Data Protection reference: Z6364106/2023/02/64 social research

Data Protection Privacy Notice

The data controllers for their respective parts of this project will be University College London (UCL) and the Behavioural Insights Team (BIT). UCL intends to share some or all of the Personal Data which it receives from the School with Behavioural Insights Ltd (BIT), and BIT may act as a separate or joint controller, or as UCL's processor, in respect of such data, as circumstances might require. BIT may share some of the data it collects with researchers at its parent company, Nesta, to assist BIT in its work (as outlined above). Nesta will act as BIT's processor for such activities.

BIT's Data Protection Officer can be contacted at dpo@bi.team.

Further information on how BIT will use your child's data can be found here:

<https://grassroots.bi.team/full-trial-parent-privacy-notice>

The UCL Data Protection Office provides oversight of UCL activities involving the processing of personal data, and UCL's Data Protection Officer can be contacted at data-protection@ucl.ac.uk.

Further information on how UCL uses participant information can be found here:

<https://www.ucl.ac.uk/legal-services/privacy/ucl-general-research-participant-privacy-notice> The legal basis that UCL would use to process your child's personal data (name, date of birth, sex, free school meal eligibility, school year and tutor group, attendance data, disciplinary report data and survey responses) will be performance of a task in the public interest. The legal basis UCL will use to process special category personal data (ethnicity and SEND data) will be for scientific and historical research or statistical purposes.

Your child's personal data will be processed by UCL so long as it is required for the research project. If UCL are able to anonymise or pseudonymise the personal data you provide they will undertake this, and will try to minimise the processing of personal data wherever possible.

If you are concerned about how your child's personal data is being processed as part of the evaluation, or if you would like to contact UCL about your rights, please contact UCL in the first instance at data-protection@ucl.ac.uk.

At the end of the project the dataset will be archived in YEF's data archive, which is stored in the Office for National Statistics' Secure Research Service: once we have finished our study, we will transfer the evaluation data, associated with meaningless pupil reference numbers (rather than identifying information like names), to the YEF archive.

There is another step to the archiving process that makes it possible to link the evaluation data with other public datasets:

Separately, we will share the meaningless pupil reference numbers, linked to information that identifies the pupils, with the Department for Education (DfE). The DfE will replace all identifying information (names, dates of birth and Unique Pupil Numbers) with the young person's unique Pupil Matching Reference number from the DfE's National Pupil Database. The DfE will transfer these Pupil Matching Reference numbers, linked with the meaningless pupil reference numbers, to the YEF archive. Using the unique Pupil Matching Reference numbers added to the data by the Department for Education, it will be possible to link the records held in the YEF archive to other public datasets such as education and criminal justice datasets. Information in the YEF archive can only be used by approved researchers to explore whether Grassroots, and other programmes funded by YEF, had an impact over a longer period of time.

The YEF will keep information in the YEF archive for as long as it is needed for research purposes. Data protection laws permit personal information to be kept for longer periods of time where it is necessary for research and archiving in the public interest, and for statistical purposes. The YEF will carry out a review every five years to assess whether there is a continued benefit to storing the information in the archive, based on its potential use in future research.

The YEF have put in place strong measures to protect the information in their archive. As well as the pseudonymisation process, the YEF archive is protected by the Office for National Statistics' 'Five Safes' framework. The information can only be accessed by approved researchers in secure settings and there are strict restrictions about how the information can be used. All proposals must be approved by an ethics panel. Information in the YEF archive cannot be used by law enforcement bodies or by the Home Office for immigration enforcement purposes.

You can find more information about the YEF archive and the Five Safes on the YEF's website [https://youthendowmentfund.org.uk/evaluation-data-archive/]. We encourage all parents and guardians to read the YEF's guidance for participants before deciding to take part in this study.

<https://youthendowmentfund.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/YEF-Data-Guidance-Participants.pdf>

If you want to exercise any of these rights after the study has finished (i.e. after the point when information has been shared with DfE), please contact the YEF. Further information and their contact details are available in YEF's guidance for participants at the link above.

We at YEF always encourage you to speak to us first, but if you remain unsatisfied you also have the right to make a complaint at any time to the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO), the UK supervisory authority for data protection issues: <https://ico.org.uk/make-a-complaint/>.

Grassroots Evaluation

(If you are happy for your child's data to be processed as part of the Grassroots Evaluation, you DO NOT need to return this form).

I **DO NOT** wish for data about my child to be collected as part of this research.

Child's name	
Date of birth	
Child's tutor	
School	
Parent/carer name	
Parent/carer signature	
Date	

(Please detach and return the completed form to your child's tutor by 15th September 2023).