

Best practice in research

Guidance for practitioners

When carrying out research with families, ethical guidelines and data protection laws should be followed.

We have provided template letters, which accompany the surveys available on the Letterbox Club Coordinators' area. Before using these letters, please read them carefully to make sure that they accurately reflect the ways in which you will use the information you collect.

If you need to adapt the letters, please refer to these guidelines to ensure you are providing participants with the following required information.

Purpose and nature of research

- Include a description of why you are doing the research / evaluation and information about what their feedback will be used for.
e.g. We really want to hear what you and your child are enjoying about the Letterbox Club and how you think we could make it better. Your answers, and answers from other families, will be used to help us understand more about how the Letterbox Club works in [name of your local authority / school].
- Include details of what participation in the research involves.
e.g. The survey should take no longer than 10 minutes to complete. Please fill them in and send them back to [local authority name / school].

Confidentiality and anonymity

- We would generally recommend that any reports or other outputs (e.g. case studies, resources, etc) that you produce using the results should not include any personal information which could identify participants. This is particularly important when working with vulnerable participants, such as children who are looked-after. Anonymity can also encourage participants to give more honest and open feedback.
e.g. This survey is anonymous - we will not ask you to tell us your names.
- If you do wish to identify participants, e.g. to inform and provide further support, you need to ask for participants' consent for this by providing an additional consent form with the survey.
- Assure participants that their data will not be shared with third parties.
e.g. We will not pass on your individual answers to anyone outside of [local authority / school] and BookTrust.
- You may want to identify participants so that you can match the pre- and post-programme surveys
e.g. We need to link your answers in this survey to your answers in the next survey that you will complete in the next few months. Please provide your first name and the initial of your surname, so we can link your answers e.g. Kate B

Please note: Your local authority / school / organization hold full responsibility for this activity and any identifiable information will be managed by you, using your organisation's safeguarding and data protection controls. This information will not be shared with BookTrust and BookTrust will not discuss individual children with you. Any information shared with BookTrust will be anonymised.

Personal data collection

- You must let participants know how their personal information will be used (if you are collecting it) and how long you will store it for.
e.g. Your personal contact details will not be used for any other purposes and will not be shared with third parties. They will be stored securely and deleted one year after data collection.
- If you would like to be able to re-contact participants after they have completed the survey, you need their permission and must only use the data for the specified purpose. You would need to include a consent form with the surveys.
- You may wish to re-contact participants for the following reasons. Where you are asking for permission to re-contact participants for multiple reasons, participants need to give consent and provide their contact details separately:
 - o Additional research
e.g. We may want to get back in touch with you to talk more about your answers. Would you be happy for us to do this? Yes / No
 - o Incentive / prize draw
e.g. Would you like to be entered into a prize draw to win a selection of books? Yes / No

Voluntary participation

- It should be clear that participation is voluntary.
e.g. You don't have to take part, but we hope you do as your answers are important to us.

Reporting and other outputs

- You should also explain what participants' responses will be used for and how their responses will be presented.
- As previously stated, we would generally recommend that any reports or other outputs (e.g. case studies, resources, etc) that you produce using the results should not include any personal information which could identify participants.
e.g. Any reports or other outputs we produce based on your answers will not use your name and no-one will be able to identify you. We may use individual quotes, but these will be anonymous.
- If you do wish to identify participants in reports and other outputs you need to ask for participants' consent for this by providing a consent form with the survey.

e.g. We may want to use your name in reports we produce. Are you happy for us to do this? Yes / No

Data storage

- Data should be stored securely. Any personal data should be deleted after its stated use.
e.g. Your personal contact details will not be used for any other purposes and will not be shared with a third party. All data will be stored securely, in compliance with the Market Research Society's Code of Conduct and the Data Protection Act 2018. Please visit <https://www.booktrust.org.uk/privacy-policy/> for more details on our privacy policy.