

Dear Sir/Madam,

We would like to invite your child or a child you care for to participate in a research project, **Park:Learn**, being run by Open Lab, Newcastle University in collaboration with Newcastle City Council Parks Services.

**What is this study about?**

The aim of the research is to explore how digital technologies can support the use of local parks and their surrounding communities as an infrastructure for learning. Encouraging outdoor learning within schools has become a high priority for Ofsted and local parks are an oft-overlooked teaching resource. Parks have also seen severe budget cuts over the last several years, and through projects like this we hope to increase their perceived value within local communities.

We are developing a mobile application – Park:Learn – which supports the creation and use of playful learning activities in parks, for use by teachers, families and park rangers (employees of Newcastle City Council Parks Services).

**What would participation involve?**

This session will involve children and their teachers and assistants testing a prototype version of the Park:Learn mobile application in Saltwell Park. This will take place during a normal visit to the park, meaning no additional teaching time will be taken up by the research.

The children will be asked to complete various activities using the app. These activities have been designed by teachers from Bede Primary School and have been designed to take advantage of the park environment as a learning resource. Using the app, children may be asked to take photos, record video, draw pictures and plot locations on maps. The children’s usage and impressions of the application will be used to assess it and shape its development going forward. These impressions may be audio recorded and transcribed for later reference.

The researchers will not take photos of your child, nor will they collect any information that could be used to identify them. Any images which the children take will be accessible by their teacher. If children take photos or video of another child using the app, this material will be anonymised if given to us.

**What happens if I change my mind during the study?**

It is up to you whether you want your child to take part. You can choose to withdraw your child at any time if you no longer wish for him or her to take part, even after the study has finished.

**Confidentiality**

All of the data items collected, including audio recordings and transcripts, will be anonymised and stored securely. Only members of the research team will have access to them. Our findings will be published in written reports that will not identify your child or show that they have taken part. If photos taken through the use of the application show other children, we will blur out their faces when used in publications or publicity material.

If you are *not happy for your child to participate in this study and wish them to be opted out* - or have any questions about the project - please do not hesitate to contact your child’s teacher, any of us on 0191 208 4631 or by using the email addresses listed below. If you’re happy for the child to participate, there is no need to do anything further.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Dan, Ting and Ahmed

**Contact Details:**

Dan Richardson: d.richardson@newcastle.ac.uk

Ting Jarusriboonchai: ting.jarusriboonchai@newcastle.ac.uk

Ahmed Kharrufa (Supervisor): ahmed.kharrufa@newcastle.ac.uk