

# INFORMATION BOOKLET FOR PARENTS



It is important for you to understand why SCAMP is being undertaken and what taking part will involve. **Please take the time to read this information booklet and discuss it together with your child.** There is also a leaflet written specifically for children to help them understand the study. Please encourage your child to read this.



# WHAT IS SCAMP?

SCAMP (**S**tudy of **C**ognition, **A**dolescents and **M**obile **P**hones) is a research study which will follow several thousand secondary school pupils across London from Year 7 through to Year 9. The aim of this study is to investigate whether children's use of mobile phones and/or other wireless technologies that use radio waves (e.g. tablets and laptops), might affect their cognitive or behavioural development (e.g. attention, memory, language understanding).

# STUDY SUMMARY

## KEY FACTS

- ➔ SCAMP will follow several thousand secondary school pupils to investigate whether their use of mobile phones and other wireless technologies has an impact on their cognitive abilities.
- ➔ All Year 7 pupils in participating schools will undertake a 55 minute computerised school assessment (including cognitive tests on attention and memory, and questions on mobile phone use and lifestyle). This assessment will be repeated again in Year 9.
- ➔ We will use these school assessment data in a de-identified form for research purposes, unless you inform us otherwise.
- ➔ With your permission, SCAMP will additionally access routine records on your child's education, mobile phone usage and health, and link these together with your child's school assessment data. Information from these routine records is essential to investigate SCAMP research questions.

## KEY NEXT STEPS

If you would like to help us with this important research, please take 4–5 minutes of your time to follow the steps below:

1. Visit [www.scampstudy.org](http://www.scampstudy.org).
2. Securely register personal details for you and your child, e.g. name, address, date of birth.
3. Provide your permission for SCAMP to link the school assessment data with other routine records.
4. You and your child will then have the opportunity to complete online parent (20–30 minutes) and child (10–15 minutes) questionnaires to help the study. If both you and your child finish the online questionnaires your household will be eligible to receive a £20 gift certificate\* as a token of our appreciation.

\* Please see the study website [www.scampstudy.org](http://www.scampstudy.org) for terms and conditions

# ABOUT THIS STUDY

## What is cognition? How will we test it?

Cognition is essentially thinking – how people think, make decisions and process information. We will investigate cognitive functioning in Year 7 pupils in two ways; using short computer puzzles and measuring how quickly and accurately they complete these, and by asking questions about thoughts, feelings, and how well they remember things. Children usually find these tasks interesting and enjoyable to complete.

## Why is the SCAMP study important?

In the UK, the majority of 11–12 year olds (70%) own a mobile phone and approximately 80% of secondary schools make use of WiFi – these technologies are part of our children's daily life. However, scientists remain uncertain as to whether children's developing brains might be more vulnerable than adults to radio wave exposures. The World Health Organisation (WHO) highlights that: *"...it is still an open question whether children are more susceptible to radiofrequency and electromagnetic fields since the brain continues to develop during childhood and adolescence."* (WHO Research Agenda for Radiofrequency Fields, 2010: 14). SCAMP addresses current scientific uncertainties and directly responds to the WHO's high priority

radiofrequency research agenda. SCAMP will be focusing on the ongoing development of cognitive functions in the brain during adolescence. The SCAMP study will enable review of current UK health guidelines which advise children under 16 to limit their mobile phone calls. This advice is based on the precautionary principle, given in the absence of available evidence. SCAMP is the largest study in the world to address this important research question and will provide the evidence base with which to inform policy and through which parents and their children can make informed life choices.

## Who is conducting this study?

This research is being led by Imperial College London, ranked in the top 3 universities in Europe and top



10 in the world in the 2013–2014 Times World University Rankings. Imperial College are collaborating with Birkbeck, University of London and the Swiss Tropical Public Health Institute. The Principal investigator and all SCAMP researchers have DBS clearance (criminal record check).

### Who is funding this study?

This study is commissioned by the Department of Health via the Research Initiative on Health and Mobile Telecommunications (RIHMT), an independent programme of research that is jointly funded by government and industry, and is managed through the Department of Health's Policy Research Programme.

### Who is overseeing this study?

All research conducted will have: insurance and indemnity cover from Imperial College London; ethical

approval from an independent NHS Research Ethics Committee; and oversight from an independent scientific Steering Committee.

### Will your child gain anything for taking part?

This is an exciting opportunity for your child to get actively involved in live science, meet scientists from a world-class research institution, and participate in research which will benefit the health of current and future generations. Additionally, if both you and your child complete the online questionnaires, your household will be eligible to receive a £20 gift certificate\* as a token of our appreciation.

\*Please see the study website ([www.scampstudy.org](http://www.scampstudy.org)) for terms and conditions.

# DATA COLLECTION AND ACC

What information do we need?	Cognitive abilities and use of mobile/wireless devices	Mobile phone traffic data	Educational achievement
<p><b>What exactly are we interested in?</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attention skills</li> <li>• Memory</li> <li>• Language understanding</li> <li>• Mobile phone usage</li> <li>• Use of wireless devices e.g. laptops, tablets</li> <li>• Use of video games</li> <li>• Lifestyle</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How much your child uses their mobile phone and what for, including:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– call frequency and duration</li> <li>– number of SMS (text messages)</li> <li>– amount of data downloaded</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p><i>NB to protect your child's privacy we will never obtain any phone numbers/ message content/websites visited/downloaded content, or any information about who your child communicates with on their phone</i></p>	<p>Depending on the curriculum your child's school follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• School exam results</li> <li>• Key Stage 2 &amp; 3 results</li> <li>• Cognitive Abilities Test (CAT) results</li> <li>• Information from the National Pupil Database</li> <li>• Information about Special Educational Needs (SEN)</li> </ul>
<p><b>Why do we need this?</b></p>	<p>To gather data on your child's cognitive abilities and their use of mobile phones, laptops, tablets etc., so that we can investigate whether their use of these devices affects their cognitive development over time</p>	<p>We will request 3 months of mobile phone traffic data for your child's mobile phone(s) annually. These traffic data will provide accurate records with which to enhance your child's self-reported usage provided in the school assessment.</p> <p>These data will be retained for research purposes for at least 5 years following the end of data collection</p>	<p>We want to understand whether the use of wireless devices (e.g. mobile phones, tablets) affects children's cognitive abilities and their educational achievements. We would therefore like to know how your child has been doing at school, and how they progress in the future</p>
<p><b>Where will we get this from?</b></p>	<p>The SCAMP School Assessment</p>	<p>Your child's mobile phone network operator(s)</p>	<p>English Department for Education and/or your child's school(s)</p>
<p><b>How can you give SCAMP permission to access this information?</b></p>	<p>Your child's school will ask all Year 7 pupils to take the assessment, unless you specifically inform the SCAMP team otherwise via phone or email. This assessment will be repeated in Year 9</p>	<p>Please go online to <a href="http://www.scampstudy.org">www.scampstudy.org</a>, register and</p>	

# ESS

<b>Health data</b>	<b>Online questionnaires</b>	
<p>Diagnoses of conditions such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Autism</li> <li>• Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)</li> <li>• Migraine</li> <li>• Brain cancer</li> </ul>	<p><b>Parent questionnaire (20–30 minutes)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Your child’s mobile phone use (and other similar devices)</li> <li>• Your child’s educational achievements</li> <li>• Your child’s medical history</li> <li>• Languages spoken</li> <li>• Home environment</li> <li>• Parents’ education and occupation</li> </ul> <p>You might think some questions are not related to your child’s cognitive development or use of mobile phones, but they are all important</p>	<p><b>Child questionnaire (10–15 minutes)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Musical ability</li> <li>• Physical activity</li> <li>• Food/diet</li> <li>• Growth</li> <li>• Noise</li> </ul>
<p>To help maintain contact and provide additional information about your child’s health status that may influence or impact their cognitive, behavioural or educational development</p>	<p><b>Parent questionnaire</b></p> <p>To gather additional information about your child, and household/ family information</p>	<p><b>Child questionnaire</b></p> <p>To gather additional lifestyle information which will not be possible to obtain during the school assessment</p>
<p>Health and Social Care Information Centre and other central UK NHS bodies</p>	<p>Online in your own time</p>	
<p>provide your permission</p>	<p>If you choose to register and provide permission, you and your child will be given the opportunity to complete these questionnaires online</p>	

# YOUR PERMISSIONS

## PART 1

### School assessment

Your child's school is participating in the SCAMP study, therefore, your child will undertake the school assessment.

- **Your choice:** If you do not want your child to take part in the assessment please inform us by calling **0800 007 5557** or emailing **scamp@imperial.ac.uk**

Data from those undertaking the assessment will be analysed in a de-identified form in order to answer SCAMP and other research questions.

- **Your choice:** If you do not wish your child's school assessment data to be used in a de-identified form for research purposes, you can ask for it to be destroyed at any time by calling **0800 007 5557** or emailing **scamp@imperial.ac.uk**.

## PART 2

### Routine data & additional information

In order to provide additional information and enhance the accuracy of the school assessment data e.g. self-reported mobile phone usage, we would like to link your child's school assessment data together with routine data that you authorise access to, and any additional information you or your child provides.

- **Your choice:** If you would like to help us, please go online to **www.scampstudy.org**, register and provide permission.
- If you do not provide permission we will be unable to access and link to your child's routine data.

## What are de-identified data?

Data which have been processed to protect the privacy of the study participant. This is common in research. In SCAMP this means that your child's personal identifiers (e.g. date of birth, address, school) will be separated, encrypted (coded) and stored separately from any responses provided or information obtained from routine data. This ensures that those analysing the data for research purposes (i.e. the research team) cannot identify your child when they are analysing the information. These personal identifiers may only be re-linked under strict conditions and with approval from the ethical committee overseeing the research study.

## Why do we need to access and link routine data?

Routine records about your child are kept by organisations such as the National Health Service (NHS) and the Department for Education (DfE). We would like to access some of this information in order to understand how your child's cognition, health and education may be affected by mobile phone and wireless technology use. Accessing this information is sometimes a more accurate and convenient way of obtaining details that you may not remember easily e.g. how many text messages your child sent last month, or the grades they obtained at Key Stage 2 etc.

## Can you withdraw your child from SCAMP?

If you decide now, or at a later date, that you do not wish for your child to participate in this research, you or your child are free to withdraw at any time without giving a reason. Deciding not to take part, or withdrawing from the study, will not affect your relationship with your child's school, and your child's medical care, legal rights, and education will not be affected.

If you do decide to withdraw, you will have the following options concerning future contact and use of your/your child's data:

- 1. No further contact** – this means that SCAMP would no longer contact you directly, but would still have your permission to retain and use information provided previously and to obtain and use further information from your child's routine records.
- 2. No further access** – this means that SCAMP would no longer contact you or obtain further information from your child's records in the future, but would still have your permission to use the information provided previously.
- 3. No further use** – this means that, in addition to no longer contacting you or obtaining further information, SCAMP would destroy all information previously provided about you/your child.

# DATA PROTECTION

## How will information about you and your child be kept confidential?

You and your child's confidentiality, and the appropriate use and protection of your data are paramount. Imperial College will ensure the research complies fully with the Data Protection Act 1998. All individually identifiable data will be dealt with in the strictest confidence. In the short-term data will be held by service providers contracted to Imperial College, who will be legally bound by non-disclosure and strict data security requirements. All data will be stored long-term on a secure computer network at Imperial College. You and your child's identifying information including name and address will be stored separately from your child's health and mobile

phone use information to preserve confidentiality. The results of this study will be published following independent scientific peer review but data individually identifying you, your child, or their school, will always be kept confidential.

## Who will be able to access and use your child's information?

Access to your personal identifying information will be limited to key members of the academic research team at Imperial College, who will be required to sign strict non-disclosure agreements. Data will always be analysed by the research team in a de-identified form. Anonymised data will be provided to research team members outside the UK where laws have been assessed as offering the same level of data protection as the UK and European Economic Area



(EEA). SCAMP data might be used to support other research in the future and may be shared in anonymised form with other researchers.

### **How will the results of the study be made available?**

Study findings will be published in peer reviewed scientific journals but no data individually identifying you, your child, or their school, will ever be published. Key findings will be shared with participating pupils, parents, and schools via newsletters, social media and the study website. Feedback on individual children will not be available.

### **What are anonymised data?**

Anonymised data have been severed from the identity of the study participant. Any SCAMP data provided to other researchers in the future would be anonymised to protect you and your child's privacy. These other researchers would never be able to re-link your child's personal identifiers (e.g. name and address) and therefore identify your child as a study participant.

# NEXT STEPS

Please take 4–5 minutes of your time to follow the steps below:

**1** Visit [www.scampstudy.org](http://www.scampstudy.org)

**2** Register and provide your permission for SCAMP to link the school assessment data with other routine records.

## If you want to help us further...

...You and your child have the opportunity to complete online parent (20–30 minutes) and child (10–15 minutes) questionnaires. If both you and your child finish the online questionnaires your household will be eligible to receive a **£20 gift certificate\*** as a token of our appreciation.

\* Please see the study website [www.scampstudy.org](http://www.scampstudy.org) for terms and conditions

## Who do you contact if you have any questions, concerns, or complaints?

If you have any questions, concerns or complaints about the SCAMP study then you can telephone **0800 007 5557** (Mon to Fri: 10.00am–5.00pm) or email us at **[scamp@imperial.ac.uk](mailto:scamp@imperial.ac.uk)**.

Further information about the SCAMP study is also available at **[www.scampstudy.org](http://www.scampstudy.org)**.

THANK YOU FOR TAKING THE TIME TO READ THIS INFORMATION BOOKLET.  
YOUR HELP MAKES OUR RESEARCH POSSIBLE.