



Department
for Education



October 2023

Dear Headteacher,

Notification: One or more pupils in year one of your school have been selected to take part in the Five to Twelve study.

Five to Twelve is a new national study of around 8,000 children and their families attending primary school in the 2020s. By following children and their families over time, the study aims to provide a contemporary understanding of how children's environments and experiences impact on their future education and wellbeing outcomes. The study is framed against a post-pandemic background which has significantly influenced the lives of primary-school aged children.

For the first stage of the study, the research contractor (NatCen) will be sending letters to the parents or guardians of the selected children at their home address in October 2023. The information posted to families will list the various ways families can get in touch with the study team should they have questions about participating or opting out.

Understandably, families may contact your school to help verify the legitimacy of the research. If so, then we ask that you provide reassurance that this is an official DfE study. You may also wish to inform staff at your school who interact with year one pupils.

Will teachers be involved in the study?

Yes, but at a later stage. It is vital for the study's aims that we also include teachers' views on the participating child's development and behaviours in the classroom. With permission from the child's parent or carer, we will ask each child's class teacher to complete a short questionnaire to understand how selected pupils are getting on at school.

Where can I find out more?

Please find answers to **Frequently Asked Questions** overleaf. You can also visit the study website at fivetotwelve.org.uk. If you have further queries, please contact the DfE team who will be more than happy to discuss them with you.

team.longitudinal@education.gov.uk

Yours sincerely

Michele Weatherburn
Chief Social Researcher
Department for Education

Frequently Asked Questions

What is the value of the study?

Five to Twelve is a new national study of 8,000 children in primary schools in England. It is an innovative study that will follow children and their families throughout the primary school years and possibly beyond. Studies like this, that follow the same group of children over time, provide unique insights into children's lives and the factors that influence their future education and wellbeing outcomes.

Studies like Five to Twelve are crucial in helping to inform decisions about national education policy and showing us how children and their families should be supported.

Who is carrying out the study?

The study is commissioned by the Department for Education and is being carried out by the National Centre for Social Research (NatCen), the largest independent social research organisation in Britain, in collaboration with the National Children's Bureau (NCB) and the National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER).

How have the children and their families been selected?

The study includes children in England who are in year one at primary school in the 2023/2024 academic year. They will be part of a group that will represent all children in their age group. The children have been identified through the National Pupil Database (NPD) which holds details of all pupils in English state education.

Will I know which children in the school are taking part?

Participation in the study is voluntary, confidential, and answers given by anyone taking part will be used for research purposes only. We will not send schools a list of pupils selected for the study, nor a list of all the pupils taking part. However, as part of the interview with pupils and parents or carers, we ask them if they are happy for us to ask the child's class teacher to complete a short survey and ask for their teacher's name. Survey invitations will subsequently be sent to the school addressed to these teachers – these will include the name of the reference child(ren). We may ask the teacher to answer questionnaires relating to more than one pupil in the same school year in some cases.

What does the study involve?

We will ask one mother/father/parental carer to take part in a face-to-face interview in the household. We would also like to ask the child to take part in three short cognitive exercises that will help us measure thinking skills. Where applicable, we will invite up to two additional mother/father/parental carers to take part in a short online survey.

Five to Twelve is a longitudinal study, which means we will track the lives of children throughout the primary school period.

What happens to the information collected?

All information provided by any participant will be strictly confidential, stored securely and protected by UK data protection legislation. It will help researchers and policy makers understand children's development and family life. The information will be used to inform decisions about education and family support policies. The study findings will be anonymised and nothing we publish will identify any individual, school or teacher

participating in the study. You can read the study's Privacy Notice here fivetotwelve.org.uk/privacy-notice.

Do the pupils and their families have to take part?

Participation is voluntary. If families do not wish to take part, they can let us know at any stage. We explain how to do this on the materials posted to families. They can also simply tell the interviewer when they visit. However, we rely on each family selected for the study to take part, so we do hope they will take part and enjoy it. The more people who take part, the clearer the picture we'll get about children's education and wellbeing.

Where can I find out more?

There is a dedicated website about the Five to Twelve study, with information for both families and teachers, at fivetotwelve.org.uk. You can also find the study listed on the [DfE research page](#).

If you would like to talk to someone about the study, please contact the DfE team at team.longitudinal@education.gov.uk.