

FAQs – Parental consent for taking part in Test and Learn

1. Why do we need parental consent?

It's standard practice in any research to get informed consent before anyone takes part. This ensures the research is ethical and respects participants' rights.

Young people under the age of 13 are generally considered unlikely to be able to provide informed consent. It's about their ability to understand the nature of the research, including the purpose of it, what's required of them and that they have the right to withdraw.

It's also good practice to inform parents/carers about research, even when young people can give their own consent.

To keep things simple and consistent, we're asking for parental consent for all Scouts to take part, regardless of age.

2. What documents do I need to send to parents/carers?

Please send both of these at least one week before the planned session, so parents/carers have time to read through with their child:

- **Participant Information Letter** – explains the research, what's involved, and participants' rights.
 - **Consent Form** – to be signed by the parent/carer and returned to you. These can be completed by hand or electronically, such as by email.
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3. Can't I just get verbal consent?

No – you need written consent, so there's a record to refer back to. The consent form can be completed either by hand or electronically (for example, by email).

It's a good idea to have spare paper copies of both the Participant Information Letter and the Consent Form at your session, in case someone hasn't completed them in advance or has forgotten to bring them.

4. Can I give consent as the leader?

No – only the young person's parent or carer can give parental consent.

5. If the data is anonymous, why do we still need consent?

Informed consent is about making sure people understand what they're taking part in, not just how their data will be used.

6. What about young people's consent?

Even with parental consent, a young person can choose not to take part. Make sure they understand it's their choice, that participation is voluntary, and they can stop at any time.

Keep a copy of the Participant Information Letter with you so you can answer any questions the Scouts may have about the research.

7. What if someone doesn't have parental consent?

Unfortunately, they can't take part in the research activities. Please have an alternative activity ready for them.

8. What do I do with completed consent forms?

If your session is being delivered by one of the national volunteer team running this project, they will hold the consent forms securely at national level.

If you're running the session yourself:

- Please store the consent forms securely until the end of the project, then destroy them.
- Confirm on the online feedback form that you gained parental consent for everyone who took part.