IMPERIAL

Participant Information Sheet for Parents/Guardians: Interviews and Focus Groups

Study title

Kaleidoscope: Sharing your gaming activity and wellbeing, a 12-month study of 13–15 year-olds

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You're already part of Kaleidoscope: what this sheet adds

What you've already agreed to: You and your teen have agreed to the main Kaleidoscope study, described in the parent and teen information sheets and repeated in Part 2 of this sheet. Nothing in this sheet changes that agreement.

What this sheet adds: An invitation to two optional online conversations with our team between March and September 2027: an interview for your teen, and a focus group with other parents for you.

What's new: One interview for your teen (about 60 minutes, £15) and one focus group for you (about 60 minutes, £20). Both are recorded and typed up without names, and the recordings are deleted within 8 weeks.

What stays the same: Transcripts are looked after in the same way as the rest of the study data (see Part 2). Your rights to stop and to ask us to delete data also stay the same.

Two separate choices: Your teen's interview needs your consent and your teen's own agreement. The focus group is your choice alone. Saying yes or no to either doesn't affect your teen's place in the main study, and we won't tell either of you what the other said, unless someone's safety is at risk.

See what you've agreed to: Everything you've agreed to so far is in your study dashboard.

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Part 1: What this sheet adds – interviews and focus groups

Your teen is invited to take part in an optional interview, and you are invited to take part in an optional focus group with other parents and guardians. This part of the sheet explains both. Part 2 repeats the information about the main Kaleidoscope study that you and your teen have already agreed to, so that this sheet is complete on its own. Your teen will receive their own information sheet about their interview. If we have invited only one of you, our invitation will say so, and you can skip the parts of this document that don't apply.

Why are we doing these interviews and focus groups?

There is little research on how young people and their families manage gaming, and teens themselves are rarely asked to contribute to this discussion. We want to hear directly from young people about their own experiences of gaming: for example, how they make sure gaming has a positive effect on their lives, how they decide to stop playing, or tips they have picked up from friends. We also want to hear from parents and guardians about the gaming rules and approaches they use as a family: which ones they use, which work, and why.

What we learn from both the teen interviews and parent focus groups will shape a later part of the study. In the last two check-in periods, we may ask some teens to try a small change to their gaming routine (Phase F, see 'What will happen to my teen if they take part?' in Part 2). These changes will be based on strategies that young people and parents describe in the interviews and focus groups. By measuring how teens feel before and after trying them, we can find out whether these strategies are easy to use, whether teens keep them up, how they affect the gaming experience and whether they help teens feel good about their gaming. *We expect these changes to be small and not to disrupt your family's everyday life.*

Why have we been invited?

We are inviting about 15–20 teens, and about 15–20 parents or guardians, from families already taking part in Kaleidoscope. We choose who to invite so that we hear from teens and families with a mix of gaming habits and backgrounds. Being invited doesn't say anything about your teen's gaming or your family; it simply helps us hear a range of experiences.

You can take part in a focus group whether or not your teen takes part in an interview, and whether or not you have joined the parent surveys.

What will the interview involve for my teen?

Your teen will have a one-to-one conversation online with a member of our research team (all team members who run sessions are Disclosure and Barring Services (DBS) Enhanced-checked, a criminal record check for people who work with young people), lasting about 60 minutes. It is a relaxed, guided conversation called a semi-structured interview: the researcher has a list of topics to cover, but the conversation can follow what your teen wants to talk about, and the researcher may ask follow-up questions.

Topics include the games your teen enjoys, how they decide to stop playing, any strategies they use or have heard about to manage their gaming, and what small changes they think young people like them might try. The complete interview guide is available on our website: study.digital-kaleidoscope.org/documents.

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There are no right or wrong answers, and your teen will not be asked to justify how much or what they play.

Your teen can skip any question, take a break or stop at any time, and can keep their camera off if they prefer. They can ask us questions about their participation before the interview, during the interview and after the interview. We suggest they join from somewhere they feel comfortable talking freely.

What will the focus group involve for me?

You will join an online group conversation with 4 to 6 other parents or guardians, led by a member of our research team. Your teen will not be present. It will last about 60 minutes and follow the same relaxed, guided format as the teen interviews.

We will ask about the gaming rules or approaches you use as a family, how you decided on them, what has and hasn't worked, and why. The complete focus group guide is available on our website: study.digital-kaleidoscope.org/documents.

There are no right or wrong answers, and we are not judging how your family manages gaming. You can skip any question, keep your camera off, or leave at any time.

When and where do the sessions take place?

Interviews and focus groups take place between March and September 2027, during the first six months of the study. All sessions take place online, on Microsoft Teams. You don't need a Microsoft account: you can join from a link in a web browser or the Teams app.

If you agree, we will send you a link to our booking calendar, where you can choose a time that suits you (and, for your teen's interview, a time that suits them). Sessions are offered after school on weekdays, with some weekend times. Once a session is booked, we will message you to confirm the date and time.

Every session is run by a named DBS-checked member of our research team.

Recording, transcripts and privacy

How sessions are recorded

Sessions are audio (but not video) recorded on Microsoft Teams, which also creates an automatic written transcript.

Being recorded is part of taking part. If you or your teen would rather not be recorded, that person won't be able to take part in a session, but this won't affect anything else in the study.

Typing up and de-identifying

A member of our team checks each transcript against the recording, corrects it, and removes names and anything else that could identify you, your teen or anyone else mentioned. Once this is done, the recording and the automatic transcript are deleted within 8 weeks of the session.

Where transcripts are stored

The checked, de-identified transcript is stored under a Study ID and kept in the same way as the rest of the research data (see 'How do you keep my teen's data safe?' and 'How long do

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you keep it?' in Part 2). Your teen's transcript is stored under their existing Study ID, so that we can look at what they told us alongside their survey answers and gaming data. Your focus group transcript is stored under a parent Study ID: your existing one if you have joined the parent surveys, or a new one if not.

Quotes and publication

We may quote what is said in our reports and articles, but never with a name or anything else that could identify you or your teen.

At the end of the study, de-identified transcripts will be published along with the rest of the de-identified research data (see 'Will the study data be shared publicly?' in Part 2). Before this, the team will go through every transcript again and remove or change details that could identify someone, such as the names of schools, places or clubs, or unusual family circumstances. Even so, someone who knows you or your teen very well might recognise a story or detail you or your teen shared.

Who hears what you say

In focus groups, we will ask everyone to keep what is said private, but we cannot guarantee that every participant will do so.

We will not tell you what your teen says in their interview, or tell your teen what you say in your focus group. The one exception is safety: if anyone tells us that they or someone they know is at risk of serious harm, we will follow the study's safeguarding procedure, which may mean telling you or other relevant services.

What we keep, and for how long

In summary, this is what we collect from the interviews and focus groups, and how long we keep it:

What	From whom	How long we keep it
Session recording (sound, but not video)	Teen (interview); parent (focus group)	Deleted once the transcript is checked and de-identified, within 8 weeks of the session
Automatic Teams transcript	Teen (interview); parent (focus group)	Deleted at the same time as the recording
Checked, de-identified transcript	Teen (interview); parent (focus group)	Kept with the rest of the research data, and published at the end of the study
Your interview and focus group consent choices	Parent, teen	10 years after the study ends, like other consent records

Will we be compensated for taking part?

Yes. As a thank you, your teen will receive £15 for their interview, and you will receive £20 for your focus group. Your teen's £15 is added to their other compensation and sent in the

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same way (see ‘How does my teen get their compensation?’ in Part 2). Your £20 is sent to you through Tremendous, the same service we use for your teen’s compensation, and can be redeemed for gift cards at around 150 shops and brands.

What are the possible risks and benefits?

We don’t expect the interviews or focus groups to cause any harm, but there are some things you should know before you decide.

Talking about personal topics. Conversations about gaming and family life can touch on things that feel personal, such as disagreements about gaming at home. You and your teen can skip any question, take a break or stop at any time. If anything worries or upsets your teen, they can talk to you or to one of the organisations listed under ‘What if I need support?’ in Part 2.

Privacy in groups. Other parents in your focus group will hear what you say. We ask everyone to keep it private, but we cannot guarantee it, so please only share what you are comfortable sharing.

Being recognised. We remove identifying details before we quote or publish anything, but someone who knows you or your teen could still recognise a particular story or detail.

Time. Each session takes about an hour, plus a few minutes to book a time.

Benefits. Many people enjoy talking about their experiences. Your teen’s views will help shape the strategies we test later in the study, and you may hear useful ideas from other parents. What we learn could lead to better advice for young people and families.

How do we give consent?

Your teen’s interview needs two agreements: your consent and your teen’s own agreement. The focus group needs only your consent. Both are optional, and you can agree to one, both or neither.

If you’re invited, we will add a page to your study dashboard that shows the information in this sheet and asks for your consent. There, you can tick the statements for your teen’s interview and, separately, for your own focus group. We will send your teen their own information sheet and ask for their agreement in their own dashboard. Your teen won’t be interviewed unless you have both agreed.

Saying no won’t affect your teen’s place in the main study, or anything else about your family’s participation.

Can we change our minds?

Yes. You can withdraw your consent for your teen’s interview, or for your own focus group, at any time, without giving a reason. If a session has already taken place, you can also ask us to delete what was said (see below). Your teen can also withdraw from their interview at any time. To withdraw, contact us at kaleidoscope@imperial.ac.uk or on WhatsApp (+44 7405 238914).

Withdrawing from an interview or focus group doesn’t affect your teen’s place in the main study. But if your teen leaves the main study, we will cancel any interview or focus group that hasn’t happened yet.

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Until interview and focus group data collection finishes (expected to be in September 2027), you or your teen can ask us to delete your teen's interview data, and you can ask us to delete your own focus group data. We will do so within 30 days. In a focus group, we delete what you said, but keep what others said. After interview data collection finishes, we will have started analysing the transcripts, so we can no longer remove them. This is earlier than the deletion deadline for the rest of the study.

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Part 2: What you've already agreed to – the main Kaleidoscope study

This part repeats the information sheet for the main study, which you and your teen have already agreed to. Nothing in it has changed. We include it so that this sheet is complete on its own, and so you can check how the main study works alongside the interviews and focus groups. Where Part 1 says something different about the interviews or focus groups, Part 1 applies.

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About this information sheet

Introduction

Questions: kaleidoscope@imperial.ac.uk, or WhatsApp +44 7405 238914.

Your teen is being invited to take part in a research study called the Kaleidoscope study. This information sheet is about your teen's participation only. Once you and your teen have agreed to the main study, we may also invite you to other parts of Kaleidoscope, such as taking part yourself. Each one has its own shorter information sheet that builds on this one. Before you decide, it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully and discuss it with others if you wish.

We recognise that this document is long and covers a lot of topics. We provide much of the same information in smaller chunks on our website FAQ (https://study.digital-kaleidoscope.org), which also includes screenshots and video descriptions, and in the teen-facing participant information sheet (LINK). We recommend you review those pages alongside this one.

If there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information, please ask us. Thank you for reading this.

Does my teen have to take part?

No. It is up to you to decide whether or not you want your teen to take part, and either of you can withdraw at any time without penalty (see 'Stopping the study: Your choices and rights' below).

If you're supportive of your teen taking part, register on our website and book a short call (about 10 minutes) with our team – we use these calls to verify that you are in fact the guardian, and to provide you and your teen the opportunity to ask any questions about the study.

If my teen takes part, can we change our minds (withdraw) later?

Yes. You or your teen can withdraw at any time, without giving a reason.

If you or your teen decide that your teen no longer wants to participate, you can inform us, and we will stop collecting any information from your teen. Until data collection for the study ends (see 'Stopping the study: Your choices and rights' below), you or your teen can also ask us to delete the information your teen has already provided, and we will do so within 30 days. After that, we can no longer tell which data is your teen's, so we cannot delete it (see 'How long do you keep it?').

Even if your teen withdraws, we must keep records of what you both agreed to and of compensation payments for 10 years.

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Background to the research

What is the purpose of the study?

We want to better understand the games that teens play, how often and when they play them, how playing games makes them feel, and how gaming fits into their family life. We are not trying to show whether gaming is good or bad.

We have called this the Kaleidoscope study, because in a kaleidoscope,lots of small pieces come together to make one pattern.In our study, we want to put together pieces of teens' days, like gaming, sleep and mood, to find patterns that matter most for how young people feel.

Who is the team behind the study?

This study is being organised and run by researchers Dr Nick Ballou, Dr Ahuti Das Friebel, Ms Josie Brooks, Dr Martina di Simplicio and Professor Sebastian Deterding. We have backgrounds spanning developmental psychology, health psychology, media psychology, psychiatry, and design. Team members are affiliated with either the School of Design Engineering, Imperial College London or the Department of Brain Sciences, Imperial College London, and are part of the Kaleidoscope Lab.

Who is funding the research?

The study is funded by grants awarded to Dr Nick Ballou by the Huo Family Foundation and Imperial College London. The study is not funded or supported by any industry gaming partners.

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Who can take part

Who can take part?

For your teen to participate, your teen must:

(i) play some kind of video game(s) for a minimum of 2 hours weekly on average
(ii) play the majority of their games on Nintendo Switch, Xbox, PlayStation, Steam (PC), or an iPhone/iPad. These are platforms we can collect gaming data from
(iii) be willing to share their gameplay data with us
(iv) own a smartphone that they do not share – this is so that we are sure that any surveys sent to the phone are answered by only them
(v) have a WhatsApp account – this is because the surveys will be sent to them via WhatsApp
(vi) not be currently experiencing severe emotional difficulties – this is because this study is not about clinically significant mental health difficulties, and we do not have the resources to support teens who are highly vulnerable

Why has my teen been invited?

We are inviting around 300 young people and their guardians from Greater London to take part.

Your teen has been invited because:

a. They are 13, 14 or 15 years old
b. They play video games regularly
c. They have their own smartphone with a WhatsApp account
d. They or you said they were interested in taking part.

Your teen may also have been invited because their school agreed to share the study with students and/or guardians.

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What participation involves

How does the study work? (Overview)

The study will last approximately one year. Each month your teen will be sent a short survey (~10 minutes) to complete. Surveys will ask questions about their background (for example, their age, gender, and neurotypicality), their gaming, how they have been feeling (for example, their mood, loneliness and how satisfied they are with life), how things are going at school, and how gaming is handled at home, such as family rules, playing together and any disagreements about gaming.

The full list of questions we ask is available at study.digital-kaleidoscope.org/documents.

Additionally, four times during the year, for a period of two weeks they will answer up to 5 short surveys on their phone about their day, gaming, and how they are feeling (about 2 minutes each).

Throughout the year, we will also collect 'telemetry data' from your teen. This is the information that gaming platforms generate each time they play and includes what game they played, how long they played for, and when they started and stopped playing. It gives us an accurate picture of their gaming without relying on memory, and tells us when to send the short surveys. *We do not watch this data as it comes in and so there is no real-time monitoring of your child's gaming activity*.

On most platforms, your teen adds our study account as a friend, and it sees what any other friend sees. Depending on your teen's privacy settings, that can include their friends list or achievements. We record limited data about their gaming activity, which is listed under 'How do you collect gaming activity?'. Our study account will appear in your teen's friends list, where their other friends may see it, depending on privacy settings.

We will not be able to see their messages, chats or calls, passwords or payment details. We cannot control their account, and we will not post anything or change any settings.

For example, the data we collect looks like this:

When	What happened	Game	Your status	What the game shows
Sat 6 Mar, 18:02	Started a game	Star Farmers	Online	Day 12 · Harvest season
Sat 6 Mar, 18:47	Changed status	—	Away	—
Sat 6 Mar, 19:30	Stopped a game	Star Farmers	Online	—

What will happen to my teen if they take part?

If your teen chooses to take part and you consent, your teen will go through seven phases of the study.

Phase	Name	When	What they do	How long	Compensation
A	Identity verification	Start of study	10-minute video call with you, your teen and a	10 minutes	£0

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			research team member		
B	Eligibility check	Start of study	A short survey	5 minutes	£0
C	Getting started	Start of study (Month 0)	Set up their participant dashboard, fill in their first survey (“baseline”), and connect their gaming accounts	About 45 minutes in total	£10
D	Monthly surveys	Monthly, throughout the year	A short survey, sent as a link on WhatsApp	~10 minutes	£3
E	Check-in periods	Four 2-week periods, spread throughout the year	1–5 short surveys per day	~2 minutes	£0.50 per survey. Up to £35 each 2-week period
F	Behaviour change	Coinciding with, at most, the last 2 check-in periods	Teen may be randomly selected to be asked to try a small change to their daily gaming routine, such as playing a different type of game than normal	No additional time required	N/A (Compensation is built into Phase E)
G	Study end	End (Month 12)	Final survey and personalised report	~15 minutes	£15

(A) Identity verification

This is the short call described under ‘Does my teen have to take part?’ above.

After the call, we add your teen to the study. We will create a Kaleidoscope dashboard for you and a separate one for your teen, and send you instructions to join in. In your dashboard, you tick the statements on the consent page to show you agree with your teen’s participation. Your teen signs in to their own dashboard and confirms they want to take part. Nothing is collected from your teen until you have both agreed. You can see this sheet and what you agreed to at any time in the study dashboard.

The dashboard is your teen’s own space: you can see whether they are taking part, which accounts are linked and the compensation they have earned, but never their answers or

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gaming activity. They use it to link gaming accounts, track their progress and compensation, and get answers to their questions

(B) Eligibility check

Your teen will answer a short survey (about 5 minutes) to check that the study is a good fit for them. The same questions are in the informal eligibility self-check on our website (study.digital-kaleidoscope.org/join), which does not record or collect any data.

Some of the wellbeing questions help us check if the study is suitable for your teen. Kaleidoscope involves answering frequent questions about mood and feelings over a year, and it is not designed for young people who may be currently experiencing significant emotional difficulties. If your teen's answers are above a set level on these questions, they will not continue to the next stage. This is to protect their wellbeing; it is based only on questionnaire scores, and is not a diagnosis or a judgement of your teen. If your teen does not continue, they will receive a message explaining that the study is not the right fit for them at this time, along with details of organisations that offer support for young people and families.

If your teen doesn't continue, we don't keep their answers. We delete them from the survey system within 7 days.

We will let you know by WhatsApp if your teen does not continue with the study, but to protect your teen's privacy, we will not specify the reason.

(C) Getting started

Once your teen passes the eligibility check, they will then:

1. Answer a "baseline" questionnaire that will take about 30 minutes. This asks:
    a. Demographic information such as age, ethnicity, gender and school year – all these items have a 'prefer not to say' option in case they do not wish to respond
    b. Information about their gaming and other media use, sleeping patterns, wellbeing, family life, lifestyle habits such as extra-curricular activities or hobbies, and important dates such as exams, tests, or competitions.
2. Connect any relevant gaming accounts to their participant dashboard. For example, to link their Xbox account to the study, they will add our lab's Xbox account as a friend on the Xbox network, which will allow us to automatically record their play. We provide step-by-step guides, and can help if they get stuck.

Once these steps have been completed, we can begin sending them the monthly surveys, and the daily surveys during check-in periods.

(D) Monthly, during the year

Once per month across the 12-month study period, we will send them a message on WhatsApp with a link to a short survey. The survey runs on a secure website called Qualtrics, takes about 10 minutes, and asks about their gaming, mood and sleep. We will also ask if anything important has changed since their last monthly survey, such as new rules at home about gaming, or starting a new club or activity.

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Monthly surveys will stay open for 7 days. If your teen hasn't finished one, we send a reminder after 2 days and a final reminder after 5 days.

Messages are only sent at 8:30am or between 16:00–21:00 on school days, and between 10:00–21:00 at weekends and in school holidays.

(E) During four 2-week periods, spread across the year

Four times during the year, there will be a two-week check-in period. You don't need to keep track of these: we will message your teen on WhatsApp two weeks before each one and again the day before. If the dates don't suit, your teen can move a check-in period from their dashboard up to a week before it starts.

During each two-week period we will send them up to 5 short surveys a day (~2 minutes):

a) 1 in the morning asking about their sleep the previous night, sent at 8:30am on school days and 10:00am at weekends and in school holidays. This survey will remain open throughout the day, and they can answer this at any point in the day.
b) 4 during the day asking what they're doing and how they are feeling in the moment. Each one stays open for 20 minutes; after that, it is recorded as missed. Most of the daytime surveys will arrive when they start or finish playing a game (based on their telemetry data), which will tell us how they feel before and after gaming.

(F) Behaviour change

Coinciding with the last two check-ins, we **may** randomly select your teen to try a small change to their daily gaming routine, such as playing a different type of game than normal, switching games more frequently without changing how much they play, or gaming in the company of friends/a sibling/a parent. We will explain exactly what the change is, and how long to try it for, before the check-in period starts.

During those weeks, the morning questionnaire will include one extra question asking whether they managed to make the change the day before. There are no right or wrong answers, and it's completely fine if they don't manage it – we just ask that participants give each change an honest effort, and if it really doesn't suit your family, to stop and let us know.

(G) Study end

At the same time as the final monthly survey, your teen will be asked to complete an exit questionnaire (this will include the final monthly survey too). Here, we will ask for some of the same information that we collected in the baseline questionnaire at the start of the study (such as their gaming and media use, sleep, how they are feeling and their family life), along with their experience of participating in the study. This should take 15 minutes to complete.

They will also receive a personalised report showing them some of what they told us during the year: for example, how their mood changed across the day, how their gaming changed between check-in periods, what time of the day they most often played, what games they most often played. Only your teen sees it, and it's up to them whether to share it. It won't tell them whether their gaming is 'good' or 'bad'. We will send this information via their participant dashboard.

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Optional: Data donation

Around months 6 and 12, we may invite your teen to share more detailed data from up to three games popular with 13–15 year-olds: **Roblox, Fortnite and Minecraft.**

Data donation is different from the gaming data that is required for study participation. This is a one-off copy of data held by individual games, and allowing us to access this data is entirely optional and does not affect your teen's participation in the rest of Kaleidoscope. Under UK GDPR, your teen is entitled to ask companies for a copy of any data those companies hold about them.

After receiving their data from these companies, they open it on our website using a purpose-built secure data donation tool called Feldspar. Their device automatically filters out personal information (including about other people) and anything else not relevant to the research, and your teen is shown a summary of what data is remaining. They choose which kinds to share and can leave out any of them. Only what your teen chooses is sent to us. Donating is optional and doesn't affect anything else.

Data donations for our study will collect information falling into the following categories, and **no others**:

- Playtime: when they played the game, and for how long
- In-game spending: purchases made with real money and items bought with an in-game currency such as coins.
- Performance data: e.g., a win/loss record, or a ranking
- De-identified social activity: e.g., number of friends, without naming those friends; number of chat messages exchanged, without knowing what was said in the messages

Optional: Interview Phase

Part-way through the study, we will invite some young people to take part in an extra ~1 hour online conversation with our team. This part is optional. Your teen can still take part in the rest of Kaleidoscope if they decide not to attend an interview.

Details about the optional interview phase are available on separate information sheets and have a separate consent form. Both you and your teen need to agree before an interview. Stopping interviews doesn't end your teen's place in the study, but leaving the study ends interviews.

What happens if my teen doesn't respond?

If your teen does not respond to 4 monthly surveys in a row, we will assume they are no longer interested in participating and withdraw them from the study. At this point, we will stop any further messaging or game data collection. Any answers and gaming data already collected will be kept and used in the study, unless you or your teen ask us to delete them. Your teen will still receive all compensation they have earned.

During the two-week check-in periods, if your teen does not answer any survey for three days in a row, we will send a friendly WhatsApp message to check that everything is working and to see whether they need help. If your teen continues not to respond to any survey for three further days, we'll stop sending surveys for the rest of that check-in period. Monthly surveys will continue until they reach a limit of 4 consecutive missed surveys, or until you or they tell us to stop.

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Stopping the study: Your choices and rights

You or your teen can stop, pause, unlink accounts or ask us to delete your teen's data at any time, without giving a reason, and your teen keeps any compensation they have already earned.

You want to	How	What happens
Stop sharing one game account	Unlink it from the participant dashboard, or remove the study account as a friend	We stop collecting from that account straight away. What we already collected is kept.
Pause the study	Email, WhatsApp, or the participant dashboard (teen or parent)	We stop sending survey invitations and WhatsApp messages for one month, but continue collecting gaming data in the background. After one month, normal participation resumes.
Leave the study	Email, WhatsApp, or the participant dashboard (teen or parent)	All collection and messages stop straight away. What we already collected is kept and used, unless you also ask us to delete it.
Have your teen's data deleted	Email, WhatsApp, or the participant dashboard (teen or parent)	We delete your teen's data within 30 days. This is possible until data collection finishes; after that, we remove the link to your teen’s contact details, so we can no longer find their data to delete it.

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Compensation

Will my teen be paid for taking part in the main study?

Yes, your teen will receive compensation as a thank you for their time and participation.

What	Base Compensation
Baseline survey + linking game accounts (x1; Month 0)	£10
Monthly survey (x11; Month 1 to Month 11)	£3
Each two-week check-in period (x4)	50p per survey (up to £35 per period)
Exit survey (x1; Month 12)	£15
Optional data donations (Roblox, Fortnite, Minecraft)	Up to £10 per successful upload
Total	Up to £195, plus up to £30 from data donations if applicable, and up to £32 in bonuses (see below)

Bonuses

On top of the base compensation, your teen can earn bonuses for answering regularly:

Surveys	What your teen needs to do	Bonus
Monthly surveys (12 in total, including the Exit Survey)	Complete 3 monthly surveys	£3 each time (up to £12 a year)
Check-in periods (4 in total, up to 70 surveys each)	Answer at least 60% of the surveys in the period (e.g. 42 of 70)	£1.50 per period
	Answer at least 70% (e.g. 49 of 70)	£3.00 per period
	Answer at least 80% (e.g. 56 of 70)	£5.00 per period

For check-in periods, your teen receives the highest bonus they reach (these are not added together), so the maximum earning is an additional £5 per check-in period.

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What if my teen misses some surveys?

We know that your teen will not be able to answer every survey sent to them. Every survey your teen answers adds to their accumulated compensation. If your teen misses a survey, they don't lose money they have already earned. They will be able to track how many surveys they have responded to, and their total earnings to date, via their participant dashboard.

How does my teen get their compensation?

We will ask you to decide whether compensation should be sent directly to your teen, or to you on behalf of your teen.

In either case, we send compensation to that phone number using a service called Tremendous. It can be redeemed for gift cards at around 150 shops and brands, such as Amazon, Argos, Apple, M&S and John Lewis. Compensation earned to date is always shown in both your and your teen's dashboards, and either of you can redeem it whenever you like, for example after each check-in period or all at once at the end.

Your teen keeps everything they have earned, even if they stop taking part.

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Risks and benefits

What are the possible disadvantages and risks of taking part?

We don't expect taking part to cause your teen any harm, but there are some things you should know before you decide.

Monitoring. Your teen knows we can see when they start and stop playing, which some people may find uncomfortable. We only see what a friend on that platform could see: whether they are online and which game they are playing (or, on iPhone, when the game apps they picked are opened and closed, and whether their phone is locked). We will never see their messages, chats or voice calls. Your teen chooses which accounts to link, and can unlink any of them, or stop taking part, at any time from their participant dashboard.

Time. Taking part involves regular surveys over a year. During each two-week check-in period, your teen will receive up to 5 short surveys a day. Some days this may feel like a lot. They do not need to answer every survey.

Surveys at inconvenient or unsafe times. Your teen's surveys will arrive outside school hours and will mostly arrive when they start or stop a gaming session. But on days they do not game, these may come while they are busy, for example, socialising with friends or doing homework. Your teen should never answer a survey when it is unsafe to do so, for example, when crossing a road or doing anything else that needs their full attention. Each daytime survey stays open for 20 minutes, so they can wait until it is safe to answer or choose to skip a survey.

Questions about feelings. We will ask your teen how they are feeling, about their gaming, sleep and their day. Most people find this fine, but sometimes thinking about your feelings can be uncomfortable, particularly during a hard time. Your teen can choose to skip questions. If anything worries or upsets them, your teen can talk to you, or to one of the organisations listed under 'What if I need support?'.

Changes to routines. In the last two check-in periods, your teen may be asked to try a small change to their gaming routine. These are designed to be relatively small changes to their gaming and not to disrupt family life. If, however, this causes disagreement, your teen can stop trying a change at any time.

Data breach. While we have taken every precaution and evaluate it as extremely unlikely, it is possible that personal data (e.g., phone numbers or the gaming account names your teen links) could be part of a data breach. To reduce this risk, these details are kept apart from your teen's answers and gaming data, in a separate, restricted part of the server. If a breach did happen, we have procedures in place to deal with it: we would act quickly to contain it, report it as required by UK law, and let you know if it could affect you or your teen.

What are the possible benefits of taking part?

We cannot promise that taking part will help your teen directly, but many young people and families find studies like this interesting and worthwhile.

For your teen. Your teen will get a behind-the-scenes look at a real research study, and can ask us anything they like about it. At the end, they will receive a personalised report on patterns in their own everyday life. Some young people also find that answering questions about their day helps them notice how they are feeling.

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For young people and families widely. Decisions about young people's gaming are usually made by adults, often without asking young people themselves. By taking part, your teen will help researchers, schools, parents and policymakers understand how gaming fits into young people's daily lives. What we learn could shape better advice and support for young people and families in the future.

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Data protection and your rights

What information will you collect?

We only collect what we need to answer our research questions and to run the study. Some of it is collected only if your teen chooses to share it.

What	From whom	When	Why
Phone numbers (yours and your teen's), and your name and email if you give them when booking the call	Parent, teen	When you register	To sign you in, send survey links and reminders by WhatsApp, and contact you about the study
Survey answers (eligibility, baseline, and monthly)	Teen	A first survey, then one a month for 12 months	The main research data, to understand wellbeing, gaming, and everyday life
Short in-the-moment surveys	Teen	Four 2-week periods during the year; up to 5 a day	To understand how gaming and mood relate day-to-day
Gaming activity from accounts your teen chooses to link	Teen	All year, while linked	To capture how much and what your teen plays, without relying on memory
Data downloads your teen chooses to donate	Teen	Optional, at set points (around months 6 and 12)	A fuller picture of activity on platforms we can't track live
Messages you send our support team	Anyone who writes to us	When you contact us	To answer your questions
Your consent choices	Parent, teen	When you agree, and any time you change them	To show what you agreed to, and when
Compensation earned and paid	Parent, teen	Throughout	To send compensation for taking part

How do you collect gaming activity?

Your teen chooses which accounts to link and can unlink any of them at any time from their participant dashboard. We never ask for passwords.

Platform	How it works	What we see

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Steam	Your teen adds a study account as a friend	Whether they are online, which game they are playing, and the status text the game shows to friends
Xbox	Your teen adds a study account as a friend	Whether they are online and which game they are playing
PlayStation	Your teen adds a study account as a friend	Whether they are online, which game they are playing
Nintendo Switch	Your teen adds a study account as a friend	Whether they are online and which game they are playing
iPhone	Your teen installs two Shortcuts we provide and picks their games	When those game apps are opened and closed, and whether their phone is locked – only teen-selected apps are recorded, no others
Data donation	Your teen downloads their data from a platform, then reviews it in their browser	Only the categories your teen chooses to share, after seeing a summary of each. Information about other people is removed on their device, before anything is sent to us

We never collect:

- passwords for any account
- the content of messages, chats or voice calls on any platform
- your teen's friends lists, or other players' data (other players' names can sometimes appear in a game's status text; we remove these before sharing data)
- bank or card details
- your teen’s location, contacts or photos
- records of which pages you visit on our website

Game companies already hold this activity data; linking lets us see the same information a friend would see. Each company's own privacy policy still applies to your teen's use of its service.

How do you keep my teen's data safe?

Your teen's study data is stored on a secure server run by Imperial College London in the UK. It sits inside the university's network and can't be reached from the internet. Its disk is encrypted.

Everyone in the study gets a Study ID, a random six-character code. Survey answers and gaming activity are stored under that Study ID. Your phone number, your teen's phone number and the gaming account names your teen links are kept in a separate, more restricted part of the database, and never in the research data. We also keep a copy of the gaming data exactly as we received it, so we can reprocess it if needed. Because this copy includes account names, it is kept in the same restricted part of the database.

Survey links contain a one-time code rather than your teen's Study ID, and none of our surveys ask for your teen's name, IP address or location.

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Who can see my teen's data?

Only named members of the research team can see your teen's data, and only the parts they need for their job. They sign in with two-step verification with accounts only creatable via secure Imperial SSO access, and changes to contact details and consent records are logged.

You and your teen can't see each other's answers. You can see whether your teen is taking part and which accounts are linked, but never their survey answers or gaming activity. The one exception is safety: if your teen tells us that they or someone they know is at risk of serious harm, we will follow the study's safeguarding protocol, which may mean telling you or other relevant services.

We use a small number of other organisations to run the study. Each handles only what it needs, following standard protocols Imperial uses for data security with third parties:

Organisation	What it does	What it handles
Meta (WhatsApp)	Sends sign-in checks, survey links and reminders, and carries messages to our support team	Phone numbers, messages, and your teen's answers to the short check-in surveys
Qualtrics	Runs the monthly surveys	Survey answers, under your teen's Study ID, not their name or number
Microsoft	Booking the verification call; Teams for the call and interviews	Name and contact details you give when booking; interview recordings
Tremendous	Pays compensation	The phone number and email address we already hold, to send your teen's compensation

Qualtrics stores survey answers in its Frankfurt data centre, in the EU. Meta may handle WhatsApp messages outside the UK.

How long do you keep it?

Until data collection finishes, we can still link your teen’s Study ID to their contact details, so you or your teen can ask us to delete their data.

At the end of data collection, we delete the phone numbers, the gaming account names and the copy of the gaming data as we received it. After that, the research data can no longer be linked to your teen's phone number or gaming accounts, so it can no longer be identified and deleted on request.

The one exception is if you ticked ‘contact me about future research’. In that case, we keep your name, email address and phone number for up to 3 years after the study ends, only so we can invite you to future studies. These details are kept on their own, with no link to your teen’s answers or gaming data. You can untick this at any time in your study dashboard, or ask us to remove your details, and we will delete them.

We call the research data de-identified rather than anonymous. It still includes details such as your teen's age, gender and when they played, so someone who knows your teen well could, in principle, recognise them.

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Consent records and records of compensation payments are kept for 10 years after the study ends, in line with Imperial College London's record retention policy, and then securely destroyed.

We process all data in line with the UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR) and the Data Protection Act 2018.

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After the study

What will happen to the results of the research study?

When the study is finished, we will look at everyone's answers together to find patterns. This can take up to two years after we have finished collecting all the data. We will then share what we learned by writing articles for researchers and policymakers to read, giving talks at research meetings, and sharing short, easy-to-read summaries with everyone who took part, as well as with other relevant organisations.

Your teen's name or any other personal details will never appear in anything we write or say about the study.

Will the study data be shared publicly?

At the end of the study, we will publish a de-identified version of the research data in Zenodo, an open online archive run by CERN, so that anyone can download it. This is part of 'open science'. It means other researchers can check that our results are correct and use the information to answer new questions about young people's lives. Only this de-identified version will be shared with others.

Before we share any data publicly, we take the following steps:

- your teen's Study ID is replaced with a different code that can't be linked back to them, even by someone who knows their Study ID
- names, phone numbers and account names are never included
- other players' names and free text that could identify someone are removed
- the team reviews the data for unusual combinations that could identify someone, and removes or coarsens them

Once data is published, people anywhere can use it for research. We can't take it back from people who have already downloaded it.

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Support, concerns and contacts

What if something goes wrong?

If you or your teen are unhappy about something to do with the study, or something has gone wrong, please tell us. You or your teen can contact the principal investigator Dr Nick Ballou at n.ballou@imperial.ac.uk, or our broader research team at kaleidoscope@imperial.ac.uk and we will listen and try our best to resolve it. Where relevant, we will involve Dr Martina di Simplicio, a clinical psychiatrist specialising in child and adolescent mental health. She can answer questions about the study and suggest where to find support, but she cannot provide assessment, diagnosis or treatment as part of the study.

If you are still not happy, or would rather speak to someone independent of the study, you can contact Imperial College London's Research Governance and Integrity Team at rgitcoordinator@imperial.ac.uk,

If you have concerns about how your or your teen's information has been used, you can also contact Imperial's Data Protection Officer at dpo@imperial.ac.uk, via telephone on 020 7594 3502 and/or via post at Imperial College London, Data Protection Officer, Faculty Building Level 4, London SW7 2AZ

If you remain unsatisfied with our response or believe we are processing your personal data in a way that is not lawful you can complain to the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO)- via www.ico.org.uk. Please note the ICO does recommend that you seek to resolve matters with the data controller (us) first before involving them.

What if I need support?

If taking part has made your teen feel upset or worried, they don't have to wait. They can talk to someone straight away at:

1. Childline. Call 0800 1111 or visit childline.org.uk (free, any time)
2. The Mix. Call 0808 808 4994 or visit themix.org.uk/counselling (up to 8 free counselling sessions)
3. SHOUT. Text message support, text SHOUT to 85258 (free, any time)
4. Samaritans. Call 116 123 or visit samaritans.org (free, any time)

Who has reviewed the study?

This study was given favourable opinion by Imperial College Research Ethics Committee (ICREC) and approval by (individuals name), Head of Department (name the department).

Contact for Further Information

If you have any questions that are not answered by this sheet, or any queries that may arise during the study, you can contact us at kaleidoscope@imperial.ac.uk or message us on WhatsApp at any time (+44 7405 238914). We reply during working hours, usually within two working days.

This isn't an emergency service. If your teen needs help now, see 'What if I need support?'

Thank you for taking the time to read this information sheet.

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Black = mandatory wording
Red = Wording which is able to be amended/deleted
Blue = Optional wording

The following sheet provides additional technical details about how we use and manage your data.

SUMMARY INFORMATION SHEET

In this research study we will use information from you and your child. We will only use information that we need for the research study. We will let very few people know your name or contact details, and only if they really need it for this study. These people will include Imperial Research Team members and support staff.

Everyone involved in this study will keep the data collated as part of this study, including your personal data, safe and secure. We will also follow all privacy laws and legislation that are relevant to the specifics of the study.

At the end of the study we will save some of the data in case we need to check it and for future research. We will also publish a de-identified version of the research data so other researchers can use it.

We will make sure no-one can work out who you are from the reports we write. The following information pack tells you more about this.

How will we use Information about you?

Research Study Title: Kaleidoscope: Sharing your gaming activity and wellbeing, a 12-month study of 13–15 year-olds

Study number: 8422990

Imperial College London is the sponsor for this study and will act as the Data Controller for this study. Being a Data Controller means that we are responsible for looking after your information and using it appropriately plus are responsible for explaining this to you. Imperial College London will keep your personal data for:

- 10 years after the study has finished in relation to data subject consent forms.
- 10 years after the study has completed in relation to primary research data.

The study is expected to finish in August 2028.

For more information / confirmation regarding the end date please contact the study team, see '**WHERE CAN YOU FIND OUT MORE ABOUT HOW YOUR INFORMATION IS USED'** for contact information.

We will need to use information (including personal data and data created as part of the study) from you and your teen for this research project.
This information will include:

- your phone number and your teen's phone number
- your name and email address if you give them when booking the verification call
- the gaming account names your teen links
- if your teen takes part in an interview, or you take part in a focus group, the session recording and transcript.

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People within the College and study team (see section 'Sharing your information with others') will use this information to do the research or to check your records (see information to be collected) to make sure that the research is being done properly and the information held (such as contact details) is accurate.
People who do not need to know who you are will not be able to see your name or contact details. Your teen's data will have a code number (their Study ID) instead.

Imperial College London is the sponsor of this research and is responsible for looking after your information. We will keep this information about you safe and secure by:

- Data management plans have been created and reviewed in line with Imperial's Information Governance Policy Framework. This covers the collection, movement, processing and storage of the data.
- Study data is stored on a secure Imperial College London server in the UK, inside the university's network. It can't be reached from the internet and its disk is encrypted.
- Robust pseudonymisation has been implemented to prevent identification: survey answers and gaming activity are stored under a random Study ID, separate from phone numbers and gaming account names, which are kept in a more restricted part of the database
- Access controls have been implemented to ensure only named members of the research team can access the data, and only the parts they need. They sign in with two-step verification, and changes to contact details and consent records are logged.

Once we have finished the study, we will keep some of the data so we can check the results. We will write our reports in a way that no-one can work out that you took part in the study.

LEGAL BASIS

As a university we use personally-identifiable information to conduct research to improve health, care and services. As a publicly-funded organisation, we have to ensure that it is in the public interest when we use personally-identifiable information from people who have agreed to take part in research. This means that when you agree to take part in a research study, we will use your data in the ways needed to conduct and analyse the research study. Our legal basis for using your information under the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and the Data Protection Act 2018, is as follows:

• Imperial College London - "performance of a task carried out in the public interest"; Health and care research should serve the public interest, which means that we have to demonstrate that our research serves the interests of society as a whole. We do this by following the UK Policy Framework for Health and Social Care Research

Where special category personal information is involved (most commonly health data, biometric data and genetic data, racial and ethnic data etc.), Imperial College London relies on "scientific or historical research purposes or statistical purposes".

INTERNATIONAL TRANSFERS

We may share data about you outside the UK for research related purposes to:

Organisation	Why we need to share data	What data they process

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Meta (WhatsApp)	Sends sign-in checks, survey links and reminders, and carries messages to our support team	Phone numbers, messages, and your teen's answers to the short check-in surveys
Qualtrics	Runs the monthly surveys	Survey answers, under your teen's Study ID, not their name or number
Microsoft	Booking the verification call; Teams for the call, interviews and focus groups, including recording and automatic transcription	Name and contact details you give when booking; interview and focus group recordings and transcripts
Tremendous	Pays compensation	The phone number and email address we already hold, to send your teen's compensation

If this happens, we will only share the data that is needed. We will also make sure you can't be identified from the data that is shared where possible. This may not be possible under certain circumstances – for instance, if you have a rare illness, it may still be possible to identify you. If your data is shared outside the UK, it will be with the following sorts of organisations:

- Companies that help us run the study
  - Meta, which runs WhatsApp, for messages and short check-in surveys
  - Qualtrics, for the monthly surveys, stored in the EU
  - Tremendous, based in the USA, for compensation payments
- Zenodo, an open online archive run by CERN in Switzerland, where we will publish the de-identified research data

We will make sure your data is protected. Anyone who accesses your data outside the UK must do what we tell them so that your data has a similar level of protection as it does under UK law. We will make sure your data is safe outside the UK by doing the following:

- some of the countries your data will be shared with have an adequacy decision in place. This means that we know their laws offer a similar level of protection to data protection laws in the UK
- We use specific contracts which stipulate that personal data must maintain the same level of protection when outside the UK as it has within the UK. For further details visit the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) website - www.ico.org.uk
- We do not allow those who access your data outside the UK to use it for anything other than what our written contract with them says
- We need other organisations to have appropriate security measures to protect your data which are consistent with the data security and confidentiality obligations we have. This includes having appropriate measures to protect your data against accidental loss and unauthorised access, use, changes or sharing
- We have procedures in place to deal with any suspected personal data breach. For further details about UK breach reporting rules visit the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) website - Personal data breaches: a guide | ICO

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SHARING YOUR INFORMATION WITH OTHERS

We will only share your personal data with certain third parties for the purposes referred to in this participant information sheet and by relying on the legal basis for processing your data as set out above.

- Other Imperial College London employees (including staff involved directly with the research study or as part of certain secondary activities which may include support functions, internal audits, ensuring accuracy of contact details etc.), Imperial College London agents, contractors and service providers (for example, suppliers of printing and mailing services, email communication services or web services, or suppliers who help us carry out any of the activities described above). Our third party service providers are required to enter into data processing agreements with us. We only permit them to process your personal data for specified purposes and in accordance with our policies.

POTENTIAL USE OF STUDY DATA FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

When you agree to take part in a research study, the information collected either as part of the study or in preparation for the study (such as contact details) may, if you consent, be provided to researchers running other research studies at Imperial College London and in other organisations which may be universities or organisations involved in research in this country or abroad. Your information will only be used to conduct research in accordance with legislation including the GDPR and the UK Policy Framework for Health and Social Care Research.

This information will not identify you and will not be combined with other information in a way that could identify you, used against you or used to make decisions about you.

WHAT ARE YOUR CHOICES ABOUT HOW YOUR INFORMATION IS USED?

You can stop being part of the study at any time, without giving a reason, but we will keep information about you that we already have.
You have the right to ask us to remove, change or delete data we hold about you for the purposes of the study. We might not always be able to do this if it means we cannot use your data to do the research. If so, we will tell you why we cannot do this.

- When you agree to take part in this study, your teen's de-identified research data will be published in Zenodo, an open online archive run by CERN, where other researchers can use it in future research.
- Separately, you can choose to tick 'contact me about future research' on the consent page. If you do, we keep your name, email address and phone number for up to 3 years after the study ends, only to invite you to future studies. You can untick this at any time in your study dashboard.

WHERE CAN YOU FIND OUT MORE ABOUT HOW YOUR INFORMATION IS USED

You can find out more about how we use your information:

- by asking one of the research team
- by sending an email to kaleidoscope@imperial.ac.uk, or
- by ringing us on +44 7438 274552
- **On our** Research website (https://study.digital-kaleidoscope.org/documents)

COMPLAINT

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If you wish to raise a complaint about how we have handled your personal data, please contact the research team first by sending an email to kaleidoscope@imperial.ac.uk, or by ringing us on +44 7438 274552.

Following our response, if you are not satisfied please contact Imperial College London's Data Protection Officer via email at dpo@imperial.ac.uk, via telephone on 020 7594 3502 and/or via post at Imperial College London, Data Protection Officer, Faculty Building Level 4, London SW7 2AZ.

If you remain unsatisfied with our response or believe we are processing your personal data in a way that is not lawful you can complain to the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO)- via www.ico.org.uk. Please note the ICO does recommend that you seek to resolve matters with the data controller (us) first before involving them.

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