

# EVALUATION OF THE FREE SANITARY PADS AND TAMPONS INITIATIVE EVALUATION

## Information sheet and consent form – Parents/Guardians

### Introduction

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Your child has been invited to take part in the *Evaluation of the Free Sanitary Pads and Tampons in all Government Schools Initiative* (the Free Sanitary Initiative). This is because your child is involved in a Victorian school that has participated in the Sanitary Initiative. The research is interested in the perspectives of all students, including male-identifying, female-identifying and non-binary students.

This **information sheet** tells you about the research project. It explains the purpose of the research, and the activities and risks that may be involved. It also describes information that will be collected about your child, how that information will be used and with whom it will be shared. Knowing what is involved will help you decide if you want your child to take part in the research.

Please read this information carefully. You can ask one of the researchers to go through the information with you if needed.

### What is Free Sanitary Initiative Evaluation?

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The Free Sanitary Initiative provides free sanitary pads and tampons via dispensing machines in school bathrooms to all Victorian government school students in Year 6 and above. The Sanitary Initiative aims to:

- provide students with the confidence that there will always be sanitary items available at school
- relieve female students of the stigma, anxiety and discomfort associated with menstrual hygiene management so they can focus on their studies
- ease the cost of living for families.

ACIL Allen has been funded by the Department of Education and Training to evaluate how well the Free Sanitary Initiative is working and the impact on school communities. This evaluation is important in helping the Department understand how the Free Sanitary Initiative could be improved.

### What does the research involve?

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School staff will administer a student survey at schools that have participated in the Sanitary Initiative. The survey will explore students' attitudes to menstruation and perspectives on how the Sanitary Initiative has gone. Your child will be involved in a survey held in class time on school premises, with staff supervision. The survey will take approximately 5 minutes.

### Does my child have to participate in the research? Can they change their mind?

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Participation in this research is voluntary. If you don't wish for your child to take part, you don't have to consent. Choosing not to take part in the research will not impact your involvement at the school.

If your child does participate, they don't have to answer any of the questions if they don't want to. If they decide to participate at the beginning and later feel that they no longer wish to, they may withdraw from the research at any time without it affecting the support that they receive or may require in the future. However, the researchers will not be able to remove any responses from the survey as it is fully anonymous.

If you decide you want your child to take part, you will have the chance to raise questions and then be asked to sign the attached **consent form**. By signing the consent form, you are telling us that you:

- understand what you have read
- consent for your child to take part in the research project
- consent to the use of your child's personal information as described.

Only a person with parental responsibility, a legal guardian or informal carer can sign this form. A new partner, de-facto parent or step parent cannot sign this form.

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**Are there any risks for my child if they participate?**

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The approach has been purposefully designed to avoid any risks for your child if they choose to participate.

We understand that it may be difficult to talk about menstruation and menstrual health. Support will also be available after the survey by contacting a support provider listed below.

**Kids Helpline** is a national charity providing support to children and young people (1800 55 1800).

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**What are the benefits if my child participates?**

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Your child's participation in this research will help to inform the Victorian Government's continuing work in delivering programs to support all students to engage in education. You will not be paid for your participation in this research.

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**Are there any costs involved in participating?**

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There are no direct costs involved in participating in this research.

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**How will my child's information be stored? Will it be confidential?**

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In collecting any personal information within this research, ACIL Allen must comply with the Australian Government's Privacy Act 1988.

ACIL Allen staff participating in the project will have access to your child's responses to the survey questions. These responses will not be identifiable, as the survey is completely anonymous. The notes and any other information received will be kept strictly confidential, in a locked computer. This information will be deleted after seven (7) years.

Your child's views may be included in the project report provided to the Department of Education and Training, but their identity will not be revealed and confidentiality will be protected. No personal information that would enable them to be identified will be included in the report.

Please note that if information that your child provides describes suffering or harm that has been caused, or is likely to be caused, to children, the researcher will be obliged to follow Victoria's laws and guidelines including the *Children, Youth and Families Act 2005*, which may include reporting to the Victorian Government's child protection services.

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**How will I find out about the outcomes of the project?**

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If you would like to hear about the outcomes of the project, please speak to the Department of Education and Training. You can also contact Amy Mehrton listed below if you would like more information about the outcomes of the project.

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**Who can I contact for more information?**

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If you have any questions about the project or would like any further information, please contact the project manager at ACIL Allen, Amy Mehrton, on [a.mehrton@acilallen.com.au](mailto:a.mehrton@acilallen.com.au) or 03 8650 6056.

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**Who can I contact if I have any complaints?**

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If you think there has been a breach of your privacy you can contact the Commissioner for Privacy and Data Protection by telephone on 1300 666 444 or via Commissioner for Privacy and Data Protection, PO Box 24014, Melbourne VIC 3001

The Bellberry Human Research Ethics Committee has reviewed and approved this study in accordance with the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research (2007) – incorporating all updates. This Statement has been developed to protect the interests of people who agree to participate in human research studies.

Should you wish to discuss the study or view a copy of the Complaint procedure with someone not directly involved, particularly in relation to matters concerning policies, information or complaints about the conduct of the study or your rights as a participant, you may contact the Operations Manager, Bellberry Limited on 08 8361 3222.

## Consent form

I understand the reason for the research and how it will be done.

I have had a chance to ask questions and get answers.

I understand my and my child's rights, as described on the information sheet attached.

I know how the researchers will keep information about my child and for how long it will be kept.

I understand the risks that may be involved with the research.

I know that information my child provides may be published in a report to the Victorian Department of Education and Training but they will not be identified, and their individual information will remain confidential.

I know that if I am worried about the research or want to make a complaint, I can contact the people listed in the information sheet.

I am over 18 years of age.

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I have ticked the boxes below that I agree with.

<input type="checkbox"/>	I provide consent for my child to participate in the research.
<input type="checkbox"/>	I am happy for researchers to record my child's responses.
<input type="checkbox"/>	The information that my child provides in their responses can be used in the project report, on the condition that their identity is not revealed.
<input type="checkbox"/>	No one has put pressure on me. I volunteer for my child to participate in this research.

### Parent or carer to complete:

I have read, or have had read to me, and I understand the Information Sheet. I the undersigned hereby voluntarily consent to my child's involvement in the research project titled 'Evaluation Of The Free Sanitary Pads And Tampons Initiative'.

**Print Child's Name:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Print Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_ / 202\_\_

### Researcher to complete:

I have described the nature of the research to the participant and I believe that they understood and agreed to it.

**Print Name:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_ / 20\_\_