Additional files

Additional file 1.	Key learnings from consultations with existing networks
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Additional file 1. Key learnings from consultations with existing networks

Broad Categories	Key learnings and suggestions	How we used these learnings
Advisory Board	• Establish an Advisory Board • Advice on Advisory Board membership and its role and practical/logistical considerations	• Established an Advisory Board to consult on network development and to provide ongoing consultation after the WISDOM research network launch • Used suggestions and advice to inform plans for membership and meeting structure and content
Membership	• School membership should be free • Participation in research should not be a requirement • Schools should provide a designated contact • Schools with pupil populations representing all socioeconomic background must be welcome	• Followed these suggestions to develop requirements for school membership (membership is free, research participation is optional, schools provide a named contact, membership is open to all schools) • Questions about suitable eligibility criteria included in survey and interview • Plans to continue to monitor characteristics of member schools
Network offer	• Schools should be provided with access to helpful and informative curated resources and newsletters • Schools should have access to research events, training and conferences for staff development • Schools should be provided with feedback from research data	• Questions about what the network should offer member schools were included in the survey and interview • Used suggestions to curate resources for the Members' Area of the website and create an informative newsletter • Plans to host webinars and provide mental health toolkits to member schools

Recruitment	• School recruitment should take place via existing channels (Local Authorities, Multi-Academy Trusts, regional meetings, etc) • Key contacts in schools should be guidance/pastoral teachers, not necessarily part of the Senior Leadership Team • Building relationships with schools is the key to recruitment • Recruitment should be approached in a phased manner	• Question about most effective ways to advertise to schools included in the survey • Staggered recruitment (selected one region/area to target at a time), with time to reflect after each to adjust strategy, accelerate/decelerate recruitment and manage demands
Research offer	• A clear process is needed for partnering the network with researchers • Researchers need to be responsible for management of recruitment to the research activity • The relationship between researcher and school needs to be reciprocal	• Used suggestions to set up processes for research partnership including the team's review of research applications, advertising research activity to schools and school expressions of interest to go directly to the researcher
Strategy and ethos	• The network needs to align itself with schools' mental health agendas and priorities and be shaped by their input • Any partnered research activities need to reflect network values and priorities • Collaborating with other research networks and not for profit organisations is important	• Used input to reinforce the need to listen to information provided by participants in surveys and interviews carefully, and that their input is crucial for an effective and successful network
Sustainability	• Ensure input and feedback are sought from member schools via	• Used suggestions to inform feedback strategy, to ensure retention of

	survey and PPIE advisory groups (staff, students, parents) • Record school demographic data to monitor reach • Have a main point of contact (i.e. Network Manager) for schools	members and allow for the evolution of the network so that it remains relevant and effective

Additional file 2

Survey Questions: Views on a Mental Health Research Network for Schools

A. Introductory information

We are researchers from the University of Oxford and we are hoping to set up a large network of primary and secondary schools across England that we can work together with to conduct research related to children and young people's mental health. We need your help to decide how best to make sure the network works well for schools!

We are looking for school staff, school governors/trustees, school and education leaders (e.g. from Local Authorities and Academy Trusts), and other professionals who work in or with schools to take part in our online survey. The survey will take about 10 minutes. You will be asked your views about different elements of a mental health research network for schools. We will ask for your permission to also invite you to take part in a follow-up survey.

If you are interested in taking part, please read the Information Sheet. If you have any questions, please do get in touch.

B. Recording Consent

Consent

If you have read the information here [link to Information Sheet] and agree to participate with the understanding that the data (including any personal data) you submit will be processed accordingly, please tick the box below to start:

☐ Yes, I agree to take part

Contact details (Optional)

I agree that my name and email address can be retained in a secure database so that the University of Oxford team can invite me to take part in a follow-up survey:

☐ Yes

☐ No

I agree that my name and email address can be retained in a secure database so that the University of Oxford team can share survey findings with me and contact me about future studies and school research network activities:

☐ Yes

☐ No

If yes to either, respondents asked to provide the following information:

Name:

Email address:

C. About you

1. Name of your place of work (e.g. name of school/local authority/Academy Trust etc.)
   (please leave blank if you prefer not to say)
   ……

2. Job role (if you have more than one position, please tick the box that best describes your main role):
   - ☐ Executive Headteacher/Headteacher/senior leader
   - ☐ SENCO, pastoral lead, health and wellbeing lead
   - ☐ Teacher
   - ☐ Support staff

- ☐ School/Trust governor/trustee/executive
- ☐ Other, please specify: ……

3. What type of school you work in or with (please tick more than one if that applies to you):
   - ☐ Primary
   - ☐ Secondary
   - ☐ Other, please specify: ……

4.Number of years in your current role:
   - ☐ 0 – 5 years
   - ☐ 6 – 10 years
   - ☐ Over 10 years

5. Your Age:
   - ☐ 18 – 30
   - ☐ 31 – 45
   - ☐ 46 – 60
   - ☐ Over 60
   - ☐ Prefer not to say

6. Your gender* (please leave blank if you prefer not to say):
   ……

*We are collecting this information because we anticipate views may vary across genders

D. Background information about the survey provided for the participant at this point

We are hoping to establish a large network of schools to facilitate mental health research with children and young people. Our hope is that by setting up and running a network, it would provide an opportunity for school staff and education leaders to develop ongoing, collaborative relationships with researchers at the University of Oxford that could be beneficial for both school communities and researchers.

We hope the network will enable schools to find out about research opportunities, and also contribute to the development of new research ideas and plans, to help ensure future research meets the needs and wants of school communities.

But we want your insight so that together we can shape what this network will look like. For example, what your views are on how best to advertise and recruit schools to the network, what exactly being part of the network would involve for schools, and what factors would encourage or make it difficult for schools to join and stay involved with a research network.

We will then use what we learn in this study to inform and guide the development of the network.

E. Questions about: Recruiting schools to the mental health research network

1. How important is it that school staff learn about the mental health research network from:
   a. Local Authorities / Academy Trusts
   b. School governors / Trustees
   c. Headteachers / Senior school leadership staff

Respondents used a slider scale to indicate their agreement with each item, where the scale ranged from 0 ("Not at all important") to 10 ("Very important").

2. What will be the most effective ways to advertise the schools' mental health research Network?
    a. sending emails directly to schools
    b. sending emails directly to Local Authorities / Academy Trusts
    c. using social media (e.g. Twitter)
    d. Network organisers organising conferences or events for school staff /education leaders
    e. telephone / video calls with school staff
    f. telephone / video calls with Local Authority / Academy Trust staff

Respondents selected up to 3 items

Please add any other thoughts or suggestions on how best to advertise and share information about the network with schools:

_____

_____

F. Questions about: Joining a mental health research network for schools

3. The Network could be open to all schools that wish to join or there could be eligibility criteria for schools joining the Network.
   How important is it that the Network is open to all schools that wish to join?

Respondents used a slider scale to indicate their agreement with each item, where the scale ranged from 0 ("Not at all important") to 10 ("Very important").

4. Which of the following may be suitable eligibility criteria for Network membership?
    a. Commitment from school to assign a staff member(s) as the school representative for the Network
    b. Commitment from school to attend a certain number of Network webinars/conferences
    c. A formal assessment of the school's 'research-readiness'
    d. There shouldn't be any eligibility criteria
    e. Other, please specify:

Respondents selected as many items as deemed appropriate to answer the question.

5. When joining the Network, a formal agreement and commitment may be made between schools and the Network organisers. In return, schools may receive accreditation for joining the Network.
    a. How important is it that joining the Network involves a formal agreement and commitment from schools and Network organisers?
    b. How important is it that schools receive accreditation for their Network membership? (e.g. a badge that can be displayed on the school website, a certificate that can be displayed at school)

Respondents used a slider scale to indicate their agreement with each item, where the scale ranged from 0 ("Not at all important") to 10 ("Very important").

Please add any other thoughts or suggestions about what should be expected from schools as part of network membership:

_____

_____

G. Questions about: Network Activities

6. As well as sharing regular updates on upcoming research opportunities with member schools, Network organisers could also use the network to run regular, large surveys in participating schools (e.g., yearly, bi-annual surveys in all or a subset of network schools).

a. How important is it that young people in Network schools are invited to participate in regular youth mental health surveys (e.g., yearly or bi-annually)?
b. How important is it that staff in Network schools are invited to participate in regular surveys about the school environment and mental health provision (e.g., yearly or bi-annually)?
c. How important is it that schools participating in research receive feedback reports, showing how responses in their school compared to other schools?

Respondents used a slider scale to indicate their agreement with each item, where the scale ranged from 0 ("Not at all important") to 10 ("Very important").

Please add any other thoughts or suggestions about key considerations and priorities for research opportunities that should be offered to schools in the network

_____
_____

H. Questions about: Network Membership

7. What should the Network offer to member schools to encourage them to join and stay engaged?
   a. training for school staff about using the Network
   b. ongoing staff development opportunities
   c. networking opportunities with other schools in the Network
   d. seminars/webinars on current topics in youth mental health
   e. written information and resources about children and young people's mental health
   f. an annual conference to share learning and information across member schools

Respondents selected up to the three items they thought were the most important.

Please add any other thoughts or suggestions about what should be offered to schools/school staff that may encourage them to join a mental health research network and stay engaged

_____
_____

Please add any further thoughts or suggestions you have about a schools' mental health research network

_____
_____

END OF SURVEY

The Interview Topic Guide

Introduction

a. Thank interviewer for agreeing to take part and make introductions.
b. Remind participant the interview will last up to an hour, and the interview will be audio-recorded.
c. Provide the following background information:

   We are hoping to establish a large network of schools to facilitate mental health research with children and young people. In the past when we have conducted research in schools, we have tended to recruit and work with schools for a specific research project – and repeat this process each time we start a new study.

   Our hope is that by setting up and running a network, it would provide an opportunity for school staff and education leaders to develop ongoing, collaborative relationships with researchers at the University of Oxford that could be beneficial for both school communities and researchers.
   We hope the network will enable schools to find out about research opportunities, and also contribute to the development of new research ideas and plans, to help ensure future research meets the needs and wants of school communities. But we want your insight so that together we can shape what this network will look like. For example, what your views are on how best to advertise and recruit schools to the network, what exactly being part of the network would involve for schools, and what factors would encourage or make it difficult for schools to join and stay involved with a research network.

   So, in this study, we want to find out from school staff, education leaders and others what they think about the idea of a schools mental health research network, their views on key elements of this type of network, and how best to set-up and run a network like this. We will then use what we learn in this study to inform and guide the development of the network.

d. Follow the guided questions and prompts for the remainder of the interview.

Guided Questions and Prompts for Qualitative Interviews

Topic area	Specific question	Additional follow-up question(s) / prompts
Concept of a schools mental health research network	What do you think about the idea of a 'school mental health research network'?	
Recruiting schools to join a research network	Can you tell me a bit about what you think may encourage schools to join a mental health research network?	Probe for differences across schools
	What may discourage or stop them from joining?	Do you have any thoughts on things we could do to overcome/minimise these challenges? Probe for differences across schools
	What are your thoughts on how best to advertise the network or invite schools to join? One approach would be to make the network open to any school that wants to join, while another approach would be to specify some eligibility criteria or commitment from the school as a requirement for membership. What are your thoughts on these two approaches?	Probe for thoughts on key people to approach/involve (e.g. headteachers, local authority and academy representatives)
	Some similar networks offer some type of 'accreditation' to member schools (e.g. a 'research-ready' badge). What do you think about this idea?	Would this be a selling point?/ a deterrent? Why? Probe for thoughts on concept of 'research ready' (e.g. What do you think a 'research ready' school may look like?)
Network activities	Similar networks elsewhere both link up schools with specific research studies as and when they are available, and they also use the network to run regular, large mental health surveys in participating schools (e.g., yearly, bi-annual surveys in all or a subset of network schools) What are your thoughts on these two types of activities?	Do you think either or both would be appealing/not appealing to schools? Why/Why not? Probe for thoughts on type of research that schools may prioritize / factors that influence whether schools take up particular types of research opportunities

	Sometimes in research studies participants are given the option to give their permission for researchers to keep their contact details so that the researchers can invite them to take part in future studies. For example, researchers may use participants' questionnaire responses in one study to decide if they might be suitable for another specific study or follow-up study on a related or different area. What are your thoughts on using this type of approach in research conducted in schools?	What benefits do you think this approach could provide, and what challenges? Probe for reason for any concerns and thoughts on how best to collect young peoples' contact details to invite them to take part in future studies
Ongoing engagement	What do you think may encourage schools to stay engaged with a mental health research network? What are your thoughts on the best way to keep in touch with schools after they join the network? What are your thoughts on the best way to keep in touch with schools after they join the network?	What should the network offer member schools? Any key incentives? Anything we could do to overcome/minimise those challenges? Probe for: - Thoughts on methods, types and frequency of communication - Key people/roles who could be key points of contact/'network representatives' within schools/academy trusts/local authorities
Network Governance	We envisage the Network would be organised by our team at the University of Oxford, with the support from an expert advisory group to guide the development and running of the network. Do you have thoughts on key organisations/people/stakeholders that it will be important to involve in the development and running of the network?	
Final thoughts & feedback	Do you have any other thoughts about a mental health research network for schools?	

Additional file 3 **Guidance for PPIE review of materials**

Guidance for researchers

Information sheet

Is the Information Sheet clear as to what we can offer you as a researcher, and what is required of you? If not, do you have any suggestions on how we can make it clearer?

Application form

Is the application form clear and easy to complete? If not, do you have any suggestions of how we can make it more user friendly?

We had hoped that a lot of your answers could be pulled directly from a CUREC form. Are there any questions that you feel were too time consuming to complete? If so, can you make any suggestions to make it more straightforward?

Were there any questions you felt were not relevant?

Do you think we missed anything that you feel would be important to capture?

Concordat

Is the purpose and content of the Concordat clear? If not, please let us know if you have any suggestions for improving clarity.

Research Activity Partnership Agreement

Was it clear that this would be sent to the Research Lead. Do you know if they had any feedback about the agreement or the process?

Guidance for school staff review

Thank you so much for agreeing to conduct PPI work for us and reviewing the WISDOM Research Network's processes and documentation. There are three main items we would like you to focus on and have provided you with guiding questions. The three items we would like you to look at are:

1. Our website
2. Our Information Sheet and Privacy Notice. These are attached in the original email sent to you.
3. Our schools sign-up process. We would like you to complete the school sign-up process through the eyes of a person affiliated with a school who may be interested in joining the Network. First, we would appreciate it if you could complete an Expression of Interest, ensuring that you include your live email address. This will trigger a series of emails, including links to a Memorandum of Understanding and Consent Forms that constitute the sign-up process. Please note that this is purely for test purposes and the data you input will be deleted from our database once we have completed testing.

In general we would like you to:

1. Check understanding
2. Advise where anything is unclear
3. Provide ideas/feedback where relevant
4. Advise whether we are communicating things in the right way
5. Advise if there is anything we could do to make it more likely that schools would like to sign up
6. Comment on usability in completing the sign-up forms

NB: In answering any of the questions, please feel free to attach screenshots if helpful.

We appreciate you taking the time to feedback. Please be aware that we are asking for high level suggestions. Due to time constraints and various approval processes, we will be able to make minor edits to the documentation, forms and website, but we will not be able to conduct full re-writes. Please do not spend any more than three hours on this in total.

Feel free to use these questions for guidance, in order that we can have a discussion on a video call. Otherwise, if it suits you better, please return this document by email.

General feedback

Could you please provide any general comments/feedback/suggestions regarding the website, information sheet and forms?

Questions specific to the website

(i) Can you try to navigate through the website to find the below information and let us know how you found navigating to them?:	
How to sign up to the network	☐ Difficult ☐ Neutral ☐ Easy Any comments?
Information on what member schools will receive	☐ Difficult ☐ Neutral ☐ Easy Any comments?
How to get in touch	☐ Difficult ☐ Neutral ☐ Easy Any comments?

(ii) Is the website content clearly set out? Are there any accessibility issues with font, colours, format, etc? ☐ Very Clear ☐ Somewhat Clear ☐ Not Clear
Please explain why / how it could be improved

(iii) Does the overall visual appearance of the website look appealing for schools and those working in education? ☐ Very appealing ☐ Somewhat appealing ☐ Not appealing
Please explain why / how it could be improved:

(iv) Are there any sections/items of information that are missing / could be added? ☐ Yes ☐ No
Please give details of missing information/sections:

(v) When you read through the wording, are there any questions you have that are left unanswered? ☐ Yes ☐ No
If yes, please list those questions below:

(vi) How do you feel about the amount of information provided on the website? ☐ More than enough ☐ The right balance ☐ Not enough
Please give additional thoughts and ideas:

(vii) Are there any key terms / phrases / vocabulary that we should be using that would relate to schools' agendas and requirements? ☐ Yes ☐ No

If yes, please provide details below:

(viii) Are there any key terms / phrases / vocabulary that have been used, that should be replaced, in case they are off-putting to schools?

☐ Yes ☐ No

If yes, please provide details below:

(ix) Check through the process for how we choose resources to share (found on the website under "Resources"). Would you feel more confident with resources that are only shared once they have been reviewed by the WISDOM network?

☐ Yes ☐ No

If yes, please provide additional thoughts/comments below:

(x)

a) Did you notice the NIHR BRC logo on the website?

☐ Yes ☐ No

b) Do you think it may impact people's perception of the website?

☐ Yes ☐ No

If you answered yes to part (b) of this question, please give reasons below:

(xi) Are there any photographs on the website that might be off-putting or send out the wrong message? ☐ Yes ☐ No
If you answered yes, please list the photos and reason(s) for not using them below:

(xii) Is there anything missing or that you would still like to know? Do you have any general comments on order/format/length etc? Please provide details below:

Questions specific to the Information Sheet/Privacy Notice/School Sign-up Process

(i) Do you prefer the term Memorandum of Understanding OR Memorandum of Agreement? ☐ Memorandum of Understanding ☐ Memorandum of Agreement
Why do you prefer this term?

(ii) How clear is it what we offer as a network and how it will benefit schools? ☐ Very clear ☐ Somewhat clear ☐ Not clear
If it is not clear, can you explain why?:

(iii) In the Information Sheet, there is a section called "Which schools can join". This section had been previously called "Eligibility Criteria". How do you feel about the term "eligibility criteria" (with regards to a school's eligibility to join the network)?

Which section heading do you prefer or do you have other ideas?

(iv) We have suggested having membership tiers that would be based on the number of research activities the school has participated in. What do you think the membership tiers should be based on?

(v) What do you think of the names of the membership tiers, e.g. member, active, advanced? Would you suggest different names?

(vi) How clear are the terms of joining the network in the Information Sheet and Memorandum of Understanding? ☐ Very clear ☐ Somewhat clear ☐ Not clear

Please explain why / how it could be improved

(vii) When you went through the process of signing up to the Network (via the Expression of Interest, Memorandum of Understanding and various consent forms), was it clear what you needed to do? ☐ Very clear ☐ Somewhat clear ☐ Not clear
If you have any suggestions, please explain how we could make the process flow more easily:

(viii) Is there anything missing or that you would still like to know? Do you have any general comments on order/format/length etc? Please provide details below:

(viii) If we were to ask the school at sign up for their school URN (unique identifier), would that be something that you would know immediately or something you would need to look up?
☐ Yes ☐ No

Additional file 4

Lesson plan for logo design (primary)

Mental Health

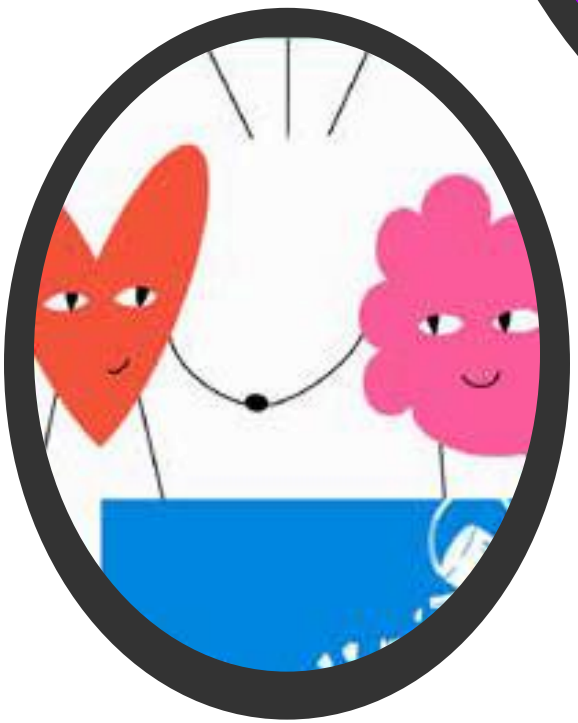
- **What does the term MENTAL HEALTH make you think of?**

- **Write on your post-it anything you can think of to do with MENTAL HEALTH.**

- **It could be:**
  - Feelings
  - Emotions
  - Images
  - Smells
  - Sounds
  - Symptoms





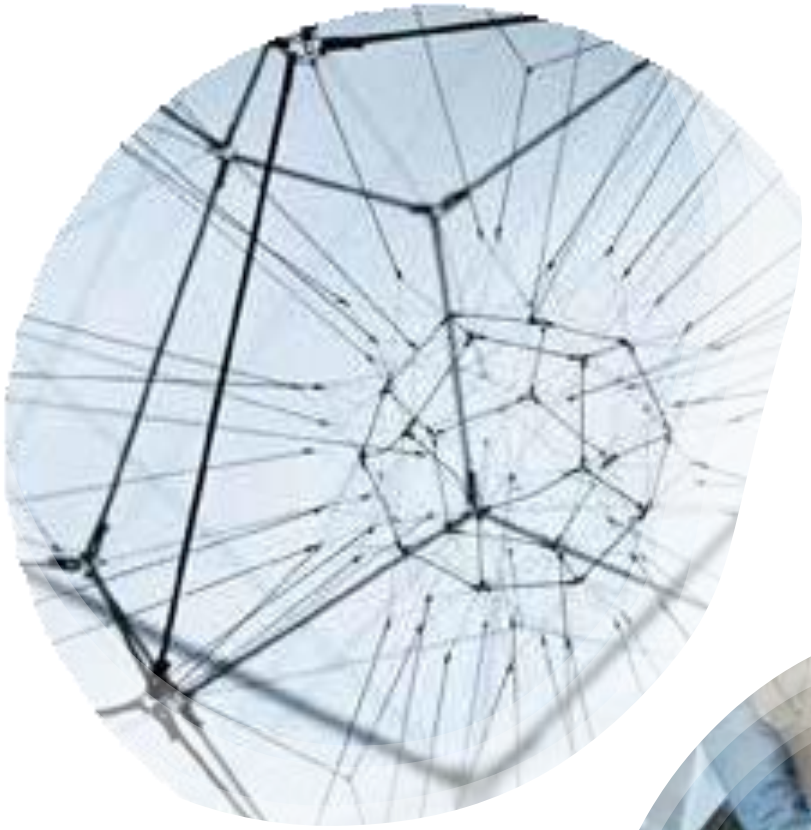




Anything that YOU associate with mental health – good and bad!

There are no wrong answers!











Network

Who can tell me what a NETWORK is?

- Networks can exist in nature... can you think of any?
- What networks are made by people?

Research

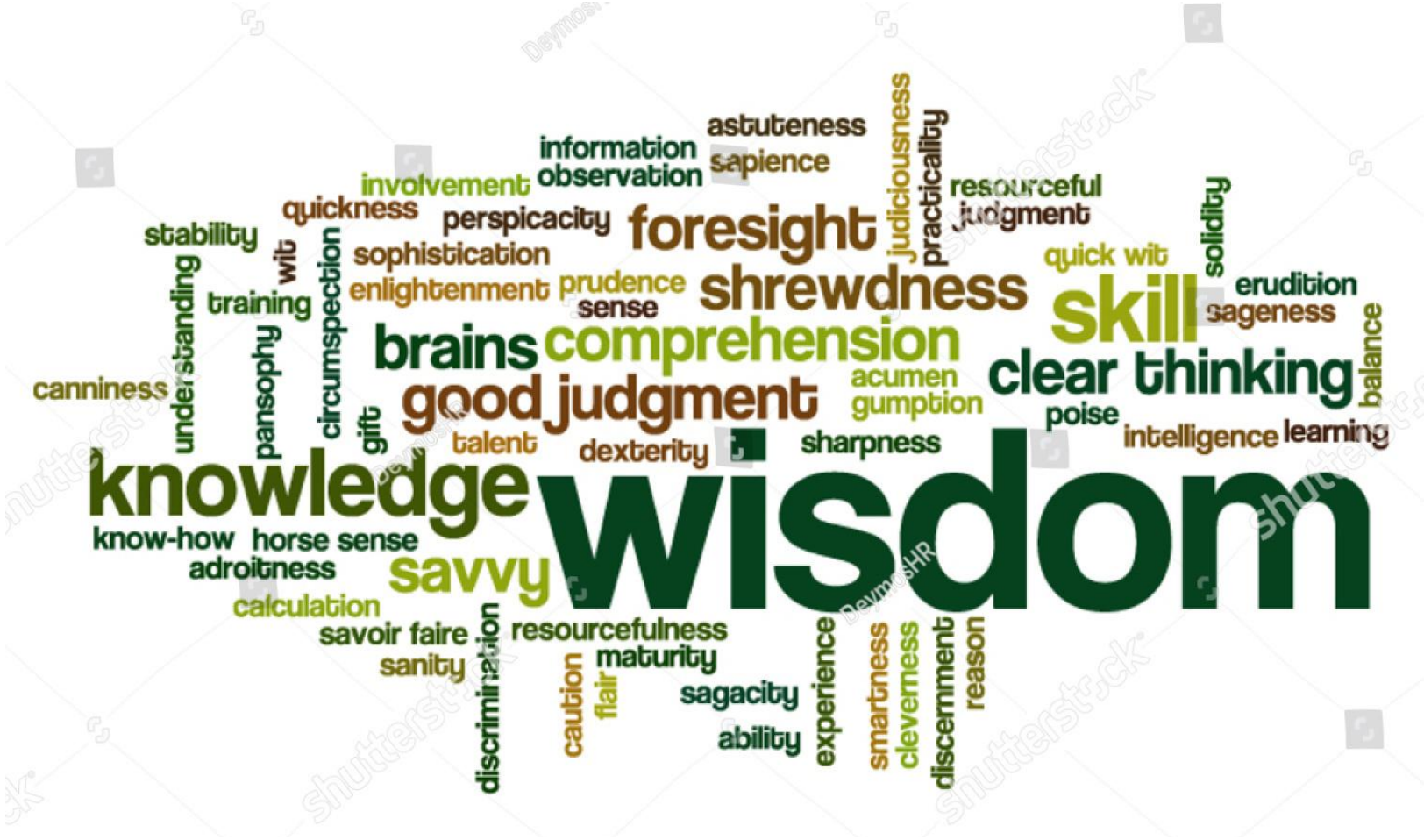


You do research in school all the time!

Can you tell me about something you have researched in school this year?



WISDOM



How do these words relate to WISDOM?

Can you tell me what some of them mean?


The job of a Graphic Designer

WISDOM

Mental Health Research Network For Schools

We are making a network that joins schools together.

All of these schools will help us, by joining in with research about mental health.

The whole network will help to improve the mental health of young people.

Lesson plan for logo design (secondary)



WISDOM Research Network

Working In Schools to Deliver on Mental Health

NIHR | Oxford Health Biomedical Research Centre



Mental Health Research Network For Schools

- Our overall aim is to improve the mental health of young people
- We are putting together a network that joins schools together.
- The network of schools will be asked to take part in mental health research.

We are in the process of building our website and developing our branding.

We need a logo for our network and would like students to help design it.

Primary school students have already created some images - we would like secondary school students to do the same.

Graphic Designer



- We have engaged a Graphic Designer who will be producing the final logo
- The images you create will help to direct our Graphic Designer and may be incorporated into the final logo
- Others may be used as additional images for branding on the website, newsletter, social media, etc.

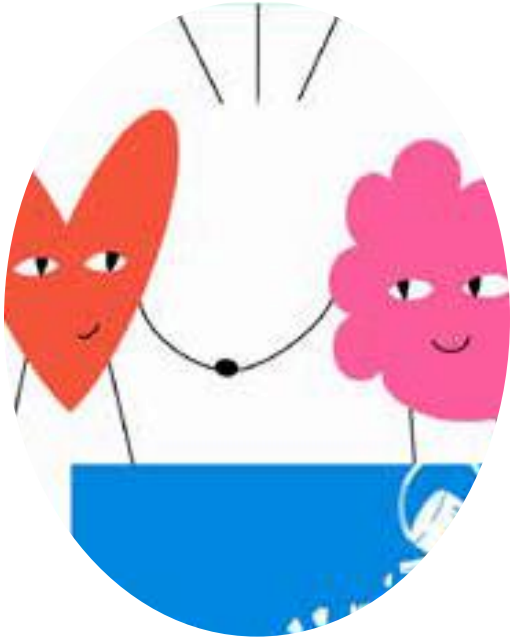
Things you might want to think about when designing your logo

Mental Health





- **What does the term MENTAL HEALTH make you think of?**







Network

WHAT IS A NETWORK?

- What networks are made by **nature**?
- What networks are made by **people**?







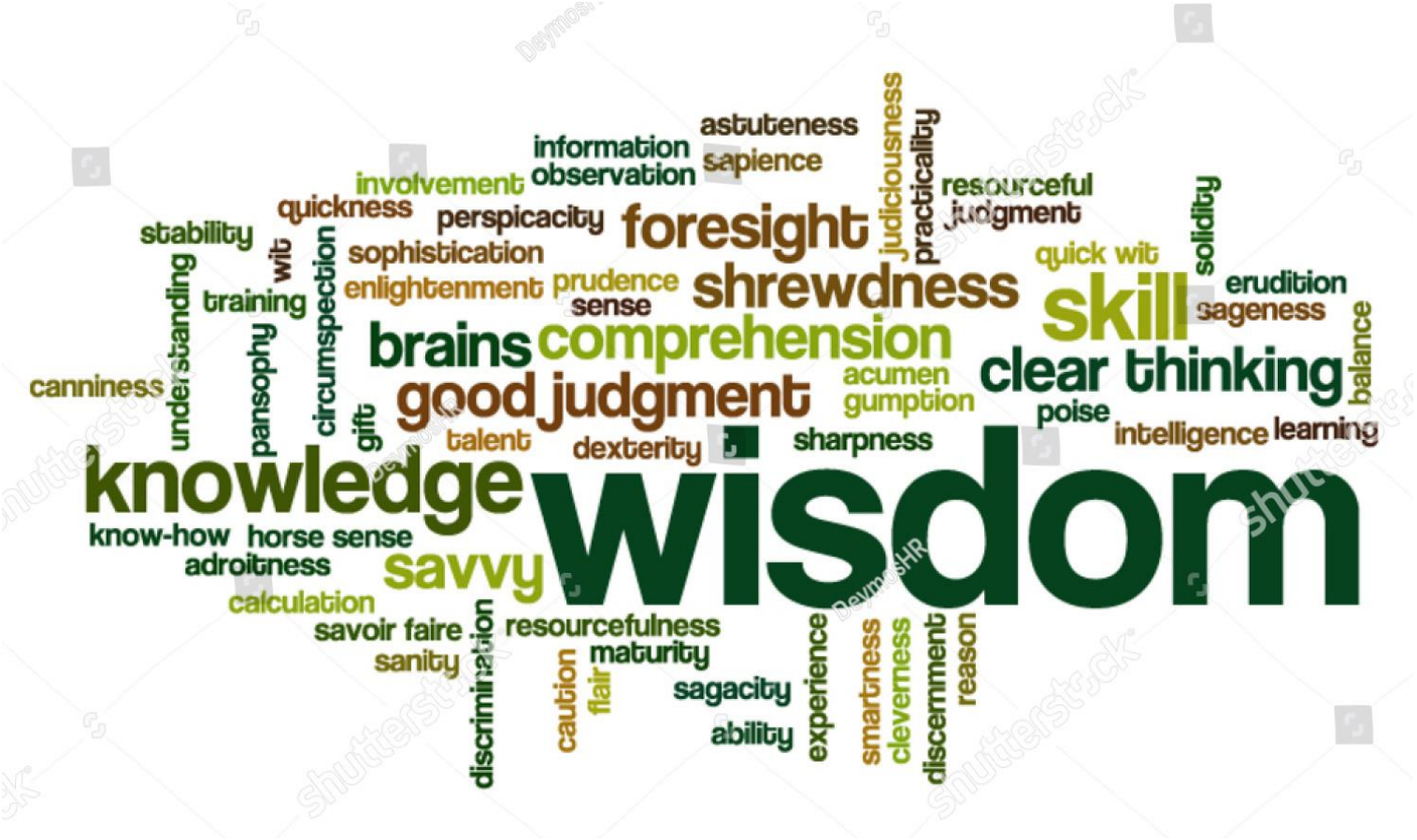
Research

You do research in school all the time!

- What is research?
- How might mental health researchers collect data from students?:
  - Questionnaires
  - Surveys
  - Interviews
- Why is mental health research in schools important?



WISDOM



You might want to consider how the words “Mental Health”, “Network” and “Research” relate to the word “WISDOM”?

WISDOM Research Network

Working In Schools to Deliver on Mental Health

Be as creative as you like!

Think about whether you can include the name of the network in your design.

Time to create your logo!

Here are a few reminders about the network:

- We are putting together a network that joins schools together.
- The network of schools will be asked to take part in mental health research.
- The whole network aims to help to improve the mental health of young people.

Thank you so much for your time and help!
On behalf of the WISDOM Research Network team



NIHR | Oxford Health Biomedical Research Centre

Additional file 5. Survey and interview participant characteristics

Characteristic	Survey N=46	Interview N =14
Job role		
Headteacher / school senior leader	15 (33%)	3 (21%)
SENCO/pastoral lead/health and wellbeing lead	10 (22%)	1 (7%)
School support staff	5 (11%)	1 (7%)
Teacher	3 (7%)	0
External organization providing mental health and related support through schools[1]	10 (22%)	6 (43%)
Leadership role in local authority or Academy Trust	3 (7%)	3 (21%)
School type		
Primary school	22 (48%)	2 (14%)
Secondary school	10(22%)	2 (14%)
Special school/alternative provision	1 (2%)	0
Multiple school types	13(28%)	10 (71%)
Years in role		
0 - 5 years	24 (52%)	7 (50%)
6 - 10 years	12 (26%)	4 (28%)
Over 10 years	8 (17%)	3 (21%)
Age		
18-30	3 (7%)	0
31-45	18 (39%)	7 (50%)
46-60	22 (48%)	4 (28%)
Over 60	3 (7%)	3 (21%)
Gender		
Female	39 (85%)	9 (64%)
Male	6 (13%)	5 (35%)
Not provided	1 (2%)	0
Geographic Region		
South West	5 (11%)	1 (7%)
South East	25 (54%)	7 (50%)
East	2 (4%)	1 (7%)
West Midlands	8 (17%)	2 (14%)
East Midlands	1 (2%)	1 (7%)
North West	3 (7%)	2 (14%)
Not provided	2 (4%)	
Ethnicity[2]		
White English/Welsh/Scottish/Northern Irish/British	--	11 (79%)
White Irish	--	2 (14%)
Any other White background	--	1 (7%)

Note. SENCO=Special Educational Needs Coordinator

[1] Includes NHS, voluntary and community, local authority and private providers

[2] Ethnicity data was only collected from interview participants, not survey participants

Additional file 6. Summary of survey responses: closed questions

Summary of survey responses: Rated importance of different features of a mental health research network for schools (N=46)

Survey question How important is it that…	n	Mean	SD	Median	IQR
school staff learn about the mental health research network from:					
Local authorities/academy trusts	46	7.78	1.92	8	2.75
School governors/trustees	45	6.51	2.57	7	3.00
Headteachers/senior school leadership staff	46	9.28	0.89	10	1.00
the Network is open to all schools that wish to join	44	8.98	1.61	10	1.25
joining the Network involves a formal agreement and commitment from schools and Network organisers	44	7.36	2.00	8	3.00
schools receive accreditation for their Network membership? (e.g., a badge that can be displayed on the school website, a certificate that can be displayed at school)	44	7.89	1.87	8	2.00
young people in Network schools are invited to participate in regular youth mental health surveys (e.g. yearly or bi-annually)	43	8.26	1.54	9	2.50
Network schools are invited to participate in regular surveys about the school environment and mental health provision (e.g., yearly or bi-annually)	43	8.21	1.66	9	3.00

schools participating in research receive feedback reports, showing how responses in their school compared to other schools	44	8.57	2.06	9	2.00

Note: Ratings from 0 “Not at all important” to 10 “Very important”. SD=standard deviation. IQR=inter quartile range

Summary of survey responses: number and percentage of survey respondents who endorsed each recruitment strategy and membership characteristic (N=46)

Survey question	number (%) endorsed
Ways to advertise the Network[1]	
Sending emails directly to schools	40/46 (87 %)
Sending emails directly to Local Authorities / Academy Trusts	8/46 (17 %)
Using social media (e.g., Twitter)	20/46 (43 %)
Network organisers organising conferences or events for schools' staff / education leaders	35/46 (76 %)
Telephone / video calls with schools' staff	20/46 (43 %)
Telephone / video calls with Local Authority / Academy Trust staff	5/46 (11 %)
Suitable eligibility criteria for Network membership[2]	39/44 (89 %)
Commitment from school to assign a staff member(s) as the school representative for the Network	25/44 (57 %)
Commitment from school to attend a certain number of Network webinars / conferences	4/44 (9 %)
A formal assessment of the school's 'research-readiness'	
There shouldn't be any eligibility	9/44 (20 %)
Other	3/44 (7 %)
Network offer for member schools[1]	
Training for school staff about using the Network	18/44 (41 %)
Ongoing staff development opportunities	35/44 (80 %)
Networking opportunities with other schools in the Network	17 /44 (39 %)
Seminars/webinars on current topics in youth mental health	26/44 (60 %)

Written information and resources about children and young people's mental health	19/44 (43 %)
An annual conference to share learning and information across member schools	10 /44 (23 %)

[1] Participants could endorse up to 3 options

[2]. Participants could select any they felt were suitable

Additional file 7. Summary of free-text survey responses

Code	Descriptor	Total number of participants with responses linked with code	Percentage of survey respondents who provided response linked with code
1	Schools are busy	9	20
2	Recognition for being part of Network	4	9
3	Opportunities for links and collaborations	4	9
4	Access to resources/training	11	24
5	Access to interventions	2	4
6	Want voices to be heard	3	7
7	Clear communication	0	0
8	Clear Network expectations	5	11
9	Family involvement	3	7
10	Regular, reciprocal communication	3	7
11	Commitment required	2	4
12	Key school roles & contacts for the Network	6	13
13	Clarity of research activity involvement requirements	4	9
14	Clear understanding of benefits	4	9
15	Monitoring of success	3	7
16	No judgement	1	2
17	Learn about success stories	4	9
18	Network with other schools	2	4
19	Varied research opportunities	2	4
20	Translation of research into practice	2	4

21	Practical support in schools	3	7
22	Funding for school engagement	2	4
23	Flexibility required	1	2
24	Virtual/remote events better	2	4
25	Clustering similar schools	1	2
26	Confidence building	2	4
27	Reach under-represented groups	1	2
28	Bespoke input/evaluation/feedback from researchers	1	2
29	Training/information for students	1	2
30	Ease of engagement	1	2
31	Adherence to a clear set of standards	6	13
S1	Suggestions: Outreach to schools by phone	1	2
S2	Suggestions: Outreach to schools by email	1	2
S3	Suggestions: In person relationship building	3	7
S4	Suggestions: Existing contacts	4	9
S5	Suggestions: Media/Social media	1	2

Note: 23 individuals who provided free text responses out of 46 survey respondents

Additional file 8

WISDOM Research Network – Memorandum of Understanding for Schools

Welcome to the WISDOM Research Network school sign-up page.

The WISDOM Research Network aims to bring together primary and secondary schools, sixth form and further education colleges in England and academic researchers to enable high quality mental health research that meets the diverse needs of school communities. Schools that join the network will benefit from engaging with, and learning from, cutting-edge mental health research, alongside opportunities to connect with other schools and help shape future mental health research.

The WISDOM Research Network is part of a wider project called Mental Health in Development (MHID). MHID is part of the he Oxford Health Biomedical Research Centre (BRC), funded by the NIHR and is a partnership with the University of Oxford, alongside the Universities of Birmingham, Reading, Liverpool, Oxford Brookes, and York, and the Oxford Health, Berkshire Healthcare and Birmingham Women's and Children's NHS Foundation Trusts.

In advance of completing this Memorandum of Understanding, please ensure you have read the Information Sheet version 1.2 dated 13.03.2026 which provides comprehensive details about membership involvement.

This Memorandum of Understanding needs to be completed by the school's Headteacher (or another nominated member of the school leadership team). Please note that as a requirement of joining the network, your school will need to provide a named "WISDOM Research Network School Lead".

This Memorandum of Understanding will take approximately 3-5 minutes to complete, after which you will be asked to complete a consent form in order to proceed with your membership enrolment.

Agreement of school membership to network

We would like confirmation of your school agreeing to join the Network. In providing an electronic signature on the form below, you are agreeing to the following terms:

- I agree to the school joining the WISDOM Research Network
- I confirm that I am the Head Teacher or nominated member of the school leadership team
- I understand that my school's Network membership is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw the school from the Network at any time, without giving any reason, and without any adverse consequences or penalty.
- I confirm that I have read and understand the information sheet version 1.2 dated 13.03.2026 for engaging with the WISDOM Research Network. I have had the opportunity to consider the information, ask questions, and have had these answered satisfactorily.
- I understand who will have access to the data provided, how the data will be processed and how long it will be stored.
- I understand that if our school engages in a WISDOM Research Network partnered research activity, the research activity team will inform the WISDOM Research Network of our involvement and, where applicable, the total number of participants recruited in our school.
- I understand how to raise a concern or make a complaint (this information can be found in the Information Sheet for Schools)

Headteacher (or nominated alternate) first name:

Headteacher (or nominated alternate) last name:

School Name

School Postcode

Electronic signature:

Date:

Do you give permission for your school's name to be used in connection with network activities (which may feature on social media, our website, or our newsletter)? Y/N

Additional file 9.

Framework for Setting-up School Mental Health Research Networks v1.0

1. SCOPE

This framework is for researchers seeking to establish partnerships with schools or educational organisations for the purpose of facilitating child and adolescent research and related activities. It will be particularly relevant for those who want to set up a network of schools and advertise relevant child and adolescent health and education research and related activities to member schools. It covers procedures for recruiting schools, formalising agreements with schools, and maintaining school membership. It also covers procedures for establishing partnerships with other researchers conducting relevant research and requirements for research and related activities (e.g. Patient and Public Involvement and Engagement [PPIE], practice evaluations) that are advertised to member schools.

The WISDOM ('Working in Schools to Deliver on Mental Health') Research Network is a Network that aims to bring together schools in England and academic researchers to enable high quality mental health research that meets the diverse needs of school communities. This framework outlines the procedures and guidance used by the WISDOM Research Network to provide an example for those setting up similar networks to follow or adapt. This framework also provides guidance that may be useful for those conducting PPIE activities or practice evaluations that do not require review by a Research Ethics Committee.

Any references to "the network" in this document means the "School network".

1.1 Schools network overview

All mainstream and non-mainstream education settings, including primary schools, secondary schools, virtual schools, and further education colleges (hereby referred to as 'schools') in England are eligible to join the WISDOM Research Network.

The WISDOM Research Network partners with researchers conducting research studies, PPIE activities and practice evaluations that help address the NIHR Oxford Health BRC Mental Health in Development theme vision, aims and objectives, and demonstrate a benefit for schools and/or participants. Activities will aim to recruit participants through schools in England, and this may include children and young people (aged 4 to 18 years) and/or adults (parents/carers, school staff, other adults working in or with schools).

From here onwards we use "research activity/activities" to refer to partnered research studies and other related activities (e.g. PPIE activities, practice evaluations).

The network requires researchers to seek review from the relevant Research Ethics Committee for a proposed research activity and have appropriate ethics approval in place, or confirmation the proposal is exempt from ethics review before the activity is advertised through the network.

2. NETWORK MEMBERSHIP

2.1 School Network Membership

Member schools receive a welcome pack on joining the network. The welcome pack includes a membership certificate, newsletter and access to a 'Members Area' of the Network's website. It may also include information about current partner research activities and any additional dissemination activities (e.g., online seminars or webinars, in-person conferences). Newsletters including adverts for partner research activities are distributed to member schools approximately three times a year and newsletters will be available to members on the Network's website. Evidence-informed information and resources (e.g. on the topic of mental health in schools) are also included in newsletters and on the Network website for member schools to access, with other additional dissemination activities (e.g., online seminars or webinars, in-person conferences) to be offered if appropriate and opportunity arises.

Member schools are offered a graded membership to recognise contributions to the Network's activities (member status; active member; advanced member), with membership status reviewed based on the school's engagement in network activities and updated on a termly basis.

2.2 Research partnership

Research activities can be a research study (all study designs are considered) or an activity that does not constitute research (i.e. a PPIE activity or a practice/service evaluation). Research partners must confirm that appropriate ethical approval is in place or confirm that the activity is exempt from ethics review before recruitment begins. It is the responsibility of the research activity lead to ensure research activity data is processed in accordance with requirements of data protection law, and they must confirm any required approvals are in place before recruitment begins.

Research partners provide the network team with information about their research activity to be advertised to member schools. The network team reviews the research activity to ensure it meets requirements detailed in the Information Sheet for Researchers.

Research partners are encouraged to provide feedback to member schools that participate in the research activity (e.g. share findings, outputs or resources) and to comply with any network reporting requirements. This includes reporting the involvement of member schools in the partnered activity via a short survey ; completing an End of Research activity report; (where applicable) acknowledge the network's support with recruitment in outputs and notify the network of research activity outputs; notify the network of any issues or concerns related to member schools.

The WISDOM Research Network will advertise partnered research and/or related activities on a 'members area' of the Network website via the termly newsletter, and in other ways (e.g., via targeted/follow-up emails to specific members, "spotlight research activity" emails).

3. TRAINING OF NETWORK AND RESEARCH STAFF

All network staff must be vetted through the enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service checking process and receive approval by the University of Oxford for working with children.

It is the responsibility of the Principal Investigator or named lead for research activities that partner with the network to ensure that all researchers are trained appropriately for the activities being carried out, and in particular that those working with children are trained in the below:

- in Research Ethics and Integrity
- in Information Security and Data Privacy
- in Safeguarding children
- to use appropriate research methods
- in how to engage children
- to recognise and deal with ethical issues
- to recognise and deal with situations where abuse and/ or serious risk is identified

Where **research activities involve PPIE activities**, researchers are encouraged to ensure staff are trained appropriately for conducting PPIE activities, according to current best practice.

Research Partners take responsibility for complying with safeguarding regulations, ethical considerations and research practices that relate to the setting and nature of their research activity and should consult and follow relevant guidance, e.g., the British Psychological Society (BPS) Code of Human Research Ethics, the National Institute for Health and Care Research (NIHR) guidance on involving young people as advisors in research, the University of Oxford's Safeguarding Code of Practice.

4. RECRUITMENT METHODS

4.1. School recruitment

School recruitment may occur via a range of methods, such as:

- Contacting schools directly via introductory emails and phone calls, with the option for an online or in-person meeting to discuss involvement. Publicly available information from the UK Government Department for Education and/or school website can be used to identify schools to contact. Schools that have participated in previous activities and given permission to be contacted about future activities can also be contacted via introductory emails/phone calls.
- Introductory emails to leaders of Local Authorities and Multi-Academy Trusts, and professionals working in schools (e.g., Educational Psychologists, School Nurses), with follow-up meetings.
- Sharing information at conferences and events, via existing networks and on social media platforms.

Interested schools are directed to the School Information Sheet and can complete an Expression of Interest form or contact the network team for further information.

The network team review expressions of interest to assess eligibility, and eligible schools are asked to complete a Memorandum of Understanding and allocate up to two named school 'Network leads' who will act as the main points of contact for the network team.

The headteacher (or another nominated member of the school leadership team) and at least one school 'Network lead' are asked to complete forms to provide consent for the network to use and store their personal data. Upon receipt of the signed Memorandum of Understanding and consent forms, the school becomes a member of the network and receives a welcome pack from the network team.

4.2. Research Partner recruitment

The network will be advertised to researchers via a range of methods, including via existing contacts and networks, social media platforms, attending conferences and events.

Researchers who are interested in partnering with the network will be directed to the Researcher Information Sheet, with the option to meet the network team to discuss the potential partnership when planning their research activity.

Interested researchers are provided with a Research Activity Application Form to complete. The network team review completed applications to assess eligibility and inform researchers of the outcome of their application. Potential application outcomes include:

- **Acceptance:** researcher(s) will be asked to sign the Research Activity Partnership Agreement.

Note. *Research activities are required to have ethics approval in place or (in the case of PPIE or practice evaluations) or confirm that it is exempt from ethics review before acceptance is granted.*

- **In-principle acceptance**: researcher(s) will be informed of outstanding requirements prior to their study being accepted into the network and invited to address issues raised and where requested, submit a revised application for review.
- **Not accepted**, with explanation and option to resubmit.

Upon receipt of the signed Research Activity Partnership Agreement, the accepted activity is formally partnered with the network and will be advertised to member schools.

4.3 Recruitment for partnered research activities

Research partners provide the network with a short advert following the Advert Template, providing information about the research activity to be shared with member schools. Research activity adverts will include the researcher's study/contact information and member schools that are interested in participating in the research activity will be directed to the activity contact. For research studies, ethical approval will need to be in place for use of the advert. Where partnered activities do not require Research Ethics Committee review (PPIE activities, practice evaluations), research activity leads are responsible for ensuring all information provided to participants is sufficient, clear and accessible, and complies with any relevant data protection requirements.

The network will include summaries of these research activity adverts in Newsletters that are distributed to member schools and may also send research activity adverts to individual member

schools or groups of member schools that are eligible for the particular activity (e.g. via a personalised email following newsletter distribution to all member schools) and/or share adverts on social media platforms.

Additional methods used to recruit participants through member schools will depend on the research activity. For research studies, it is the responsibility of the Principal Investigator to ensure recruitment methods that received ethical approval are followed. For PPIE activities and practice evaluations that do not require research ethics review, it is the responsibility of the activity lead to ensure recruitment methods follow best practice and consider unequal relationships between researchers and participants.

5. INFORMATION PROVIDED TO SCHOOLS, RESEARCHERS AND PARTICIPANTS

The network provides the Information Sheet for Schools to schools interested in joining the network and the Information Sheet for Researchers for researchers interested in advertising a research activity to member schools. The information sheet templates associated with this procedure were developed in consultation with school staff and researchers to help ensure sufficient information is provided and the information is clear and easy to understand.

Research partners are provided with an Advert Template to use to create a research activity advert to be distributed to member schools and are asked to present key information about the research activity in an accessible way.

The network encourages research partners to get input and advice from relevant members of the public (e.g. school staff, young people, parents/carers) when developing all information for participants, to help ensure information is sufficient, age-appropriate and can be easily understood by the target participant group.

6. AGREEMENT AND CONSENT PROCEDURES

6.1. Member schools

Headteachers (or another nominated member of the school leadership team) will complete and sign a Memorandum of Understanding to join the network. The agreement outlines the aims and purposes of the network and the school's role in the network. **Joining the network *is not* consent to participate in any research activities.**

After the Memorandum of Understanding is signed, the network will obtain consent from individual members of school staff for use and storage of their personal data. **This is not *consent* to participate in any research activities.**

6.2 Researcher partners

Research activity leads complete and sign a Research Activity Partnership Agreement to partner with the network.

6.3. Research activity participants

Consent procedures for partner research studies will have been reviewed and approved by the appropriate Research Ethics Committee before recruitment begins. Where researchers contact the network when planning a research activity, where applicable they will be directed to the relevant ethics committee guidance and resources for ethics applications.

Where partnered activities involve evaluations of existing practice and do not require review by a Research Ethics Committee, it may not always be necessary to obtain informed consent (e.g. where collected data is aggregated or anonymised). Researchers are asked to consider potential unequal relationships between researchers and participants and take appropriate steps to ensure that participant choice and autonomy are respected throughout the activity.

Where partner activities are PPIE activities, researchers are encouraged to follow best practice.

7. COMPENSATION

Schools will not receive any monetary incentive, remuneration, or financial recompense for joining the network.

Research partners will not receive any monetary incentive, remuneration, or financial recompense for partnering with the network.

Compensation given by research partners to schools and/or participants for research activities that are advertised to member schools will have been reviewed and approved by the appropriate Research Ethics Committee.

Where **PPIE activities** are advertised through the network, researchers are encouraged to consult and follow relevant current guidance on payment for PPI activities, for example:

- For adult participants (e.g. school staff, parents/carers) (at the time of writing) the NIHR outline recommended payments. Information about compensation for PPI participants and how and when payments will be made is also expected to be clearly detailed in information provided to participants.

- For children and young people, the NIHR INVOLVE guidance outlines that it is best practice to work with children and to recognise and reward children and adolescents for their time spent on PPI activities, and they should not be out of pocket for any travel expenses. However, there is no one agreed-upon compensation for PPIE activities with children and young people. Research partners will be encouraged to work with the children and young people to determine the appropriate compensation for the PPIE activities (e.g. shopping vouchers, monetary payments).

8. POTENTIAL RISKS TO SCHOOLS/PARTICIPANTS/RESEARCHERS/OTHERS AND WHAT WILL BE DONE TO MINIMISE

One possible risk for the administration of the network is that member schools may have a poor experience within one of the partner research activities advertised through the network. To help address and monitor this risk, research partners must agree to notify the network team of any issues

or concerns related to member schools involved in partnered activities as soon as possible. Schools will also have the opportunity to feed back to the network team about any potential issues or concerns.

The Principal Investigator or named activity lead for partner research activities will be responsible for identifying and minimising any potential risks to participants and research staff. Where partner activities are research studies that require ethics review, potential risks and procedures for minimising these risks will have been reviewed and approved by the relevant Research Ethics Committee before the activity is advertised through the network.

9. MONITORING AND REPORTING OF ADVERSE OR UNFORESEEN EVENTS

Schools that join the network are asked to report back to the network team if they have a poor experience of being a member of the network and/or with a research activity advertised through the network.

Research partners are expected to have established their own process for monitoring and reporting adverse or unforeseen events in their research activity. Where partner activities are research studies that require ethics review, procedures for monitoring and reporting of adverse or unforeseen events will have been reviewed and approved by the relevant Research Ethics Committee before the activity is advertised through the network.

10. COMMUNICATION OF RESULTS

Schools that join the network should receive regular communication on Network activities (e.g. through Newsletters, website/social media updates, conferences/events). The network aims to ensure information and updates that are shared with members are meaningful and accessible for schools.

Research partners that advertise activities through the network are asked to provide feedback to member schools. The information that is shared with schools will vary depending on the activity and there may be restrictions in what researchers are able to share. For research studies and practice evaluations this may be a summary of key findings and implications for school policy or practice, and for PPIE activities this may be a summary of how participant insights have been used to inform future research plans.

11. DATA MANAGEMENT AND PROTECTION

The network will manage data collected from schools and research partners in line with the University of Oxford's Best Practice Guidance 09 on Data collection, protection and management.

Information Sheets for schools and researchers each refer to the separate respective Data Privacy Notices which outline which data will be collected; how they will be collected, transferred, and stored; where and for how long they will be stored; who will have access to them; and how they will be used.

Data storage for each type of data is described below. The information will be held as long as it is required for the purpose of the running of the Network and appropriate safeguards are in place. This will be reviewed annually on an ongoing basis:

- **Memorandum of Understanding and Research Activity Partnership Agreement**: These will be collected through a University recommended and approved online platform (e.g. REDCap, Qualtrics, MS Forms, Jisc) and then transferred electronically for storage on a secure University server (e.g. University Nexus365 platform) with restricted access to network team.

- **Contact details of schools, individual members of school staff and researchers:** These will be collected through a University recommended and approved online platform (e.g. REDCap, Qualtrics, MS Forms, Jisc) and then transferred for storage on a secure University server (e.g. University Nexus365 platform) with restricted access to network team. School details will not be shared with potential researchers wishing to partner with the network. Researchers who partner with the network will agree to have their work contact details shared (for recruitment purposes) through activity recruitment materials.

- **Field notes:** Network staff may write field notes when undertaking PPIE activities for the development and/or maintenance of the network. These will be held on a secure University server (e.g. University Nexus365 platform) with restricted access to network team members.

- **Data in the public domain:** Publicly available data files will be downloaded from the relevant sources (e.g. Department for Education website, Office for National Statistics website) and transferred electronically for storage on a secure University server (e.g. University Nexus365 platform) with restricted access to network team members.

- **Visual images:** The network may collect photographs from schools/researchers involved in the network for the network's public-facing platforms (i.e. website/social media accounts) with the explicit permission of all involved. These may be received via email or other routes, and they will be transferred electronically for storage on a secure University server (e.g. University Nexus365 platform) with restricted access to network team members.

- **IP addresses:** While the network do not specifically aim to collect IP addresses, they may be passively collected through survey platforms or through website analytics. The network does not intend to store or analyse these.

The network team (University of Oxford staff) will have access to the data collected and processed by the network.

Information shared with member schools about network research activities will include researchers' professional (not personal) contact details (e.g. work email address, mailing address, phone number) of the researcher(s). This information may be identifiable and the sharing of which will have been made clear to researchers in advance. The network will not share information about schools or school contacts with researchers unless this is specifically requested by schools/school contacts.

The network will maintain identifiable data for the duration of the network's existence and will delete all identifiable data (stored electronically) 12 months after the conclusion of the network. With permission, photographs may be maintained for use on legacy websites, future network/research activities.

School staff have the right to withdraw their consent and relinquish the school's membership of the network at any point. The network will maintain a record of their removal of consent in a restricted access folder on a University of Oxford provided storage system (e.g. University Nexus 365 platform) for 48 months.

Research partners have the right to remove their research activity from future involvement in the WISDOM Research Network. Where this happens, the record of the research activity will be deleted from the University recommended and approved data collection platform (e.g. REDCap, Qualtrics, MS Forms, Jisc). The record of the research activity (with no individual researcher names or contact information) will be retained in a file on the University of Oxford provided storage system (University Nexus 365 platform). It also may not be possible to remove any previous advertisements about the research activity from published materials that are already in the public domain. The network team will maintain a record of the removal of the partnership of their research activity in a restricted access folder on a University of Oxford provided storage system (University Nexus 365 platform) for the length of the project.

The Principal Investigator or named activity lead for research activities that are advertised through the network is responsible for ensuring research activity data is managed in accordance with requirements of data protection law.

Partnered research activities from the University of Oxford must be conducted in accordance with the University's Policy on the Management of Data Supporting Research Outputs; CUREC's Best Practice Guidance 09 on Data collection, protection and management; and Research Data Oxford's guidance on data backup, storage and security. Partnered research activities from another institution must be conducted in accordance with their own institutions policies and guidance on data collection, protection, management, storage and security.

12. FURTHER INFORMATION

School Information Sheet
Expression of Interest form
Memorandum of Understanding

Researcher Information Sheet
Research Activity Application Form
Research Activity Partnership Agreement
Research Activity Advert Template

Data privacy notices for schools
Data privacy notices for researchers

13. CHANGE HISTORY

Version No.	Significant Changes	Previous Version No.
1.0	This is the first version of this SOP	N/A

Additional file 10. Characteristics of WISDOM member schools (N=85 schools)

Characteristic	N (%)
School type	
State-funded primary	38 (44.7%)
State-funded secondary	24 (28.2%)
State-funded primary and secondary	3 (3.5%)
Post-16 only	4 (4.7%)
State-funded special school	5 (5.9%)
State-funded alternative provision	3 (3.5%)
Independent school*	8 (9.4%)
School governance	
Local authority maintained	20 (23.5%)
Academy Trust	55 (64.7%)
Further education	2 (2.4%)
Independent	8 (9.4%)
Geographic Region	
Greater London	4 (4.7%)
South East	46 (54.1%)
South West	12 (14.1%)
East	3 (3.5%)
West Midlands	6 (7.1%)
North West	5 (5.9%)
North East	9 (10.6%)
Free School Meals	
Below 2023/2024 national average of 24.6% of pupils eligible for free schools meals	36 (42.4%)
Above 2023/2024 national average of 24.6% pupils from a minority ethnic background	32 (37.6%)
Data not available	17 (20%)
English as an Additional Language	
Below 2023/2024 national average of 20.8% of pupils from a minority ethnic background	52 (61.2%)
Above 2023/2024 national average of 20.8% pupils from a minority ethnic background	17 (20%)
Data not available	16 (18.8%)
Ethnic background	
Below 2023/2024 national average of 37.0% of pupils from a minority ethnic background	48 (56.5%)
Above 2023/2024 national average of 37.0% pupils from a minority ethnic background	22 (25.9%)
Data not available	15 (17.6%)

*includes one independent special school