*Parents’ Aspiration for their Child Trial (PACT)*

*Testing the impact of modified school reports and parental contracts on parental expectations and aspirations for university.*

*What is PACT?*

Parents’ Aspiration for their Child Trial (PACT) is a new project designed by MBA candidates from Harvard Business School in conjunction with the Behavioural Insights Team (BIT) and King’s College London (KCL).

**We are looking for schools that would like to participate in this project.**

The project will test two low-cost interventions that could positively influence parental expectations and aspirations for their child’s prospects of attending and succeeding at university. These interventions are:

* A modified school/parent contract, where parents make an additional commitment to support their child in their preparation for university or other forms of further education.
* A cover letter that accompanies school reports which explains how a child’s current performance in certain subjects could lead to particular degrees or careers.

Examples of these interventions can be found below.Both the contract and the letter will be sent to parents of students in Years 7-9.

The interventions will be tested using a randomised controlled trial – students will be randomly selected to receive the interventions.

*What type of schools are we looking for?*

1. Schools that issue termly reports for students in Years 7-9
2. Schools that issue (or are open to issuing) school/parent contracts each year in Years 7-9

*Why should my school participate in the project?*

1. We believe that it will increase the chance of your schools’ pupils attending university.
2. We will provide each participating school with a school-level summary report on parent and student aspirations related to university, as measured by project questionnaires. This will give you an insight into the attitudes of your schools’ parents towards higher education, and how your school compares to other participating schools.

*What does the project require from my school?*

1. We need access to student-level data in order to target our interventions at the right students. Examples of data we need include postcode, Key Stage 2 scores, and student grades and demographics. (We don’t need the names of students.)
2. We need your cooperation collating and circulating the contracts and report letters.
3. We need your help making sure our surveys reach the parents and students of your school (e.g. by post or by email).

Below is the planned timeline of events for the trial. At every stage we are keen to tailor the trial to best suit schools’ needs.

*Who is involved in the project?*

* [The Widening Participation Department](https://www.kcl.ac.uk/study/widening-participation/index.aspx), King’s College London (KCLWP), are committed to finding the brightest minds regardless of their background and supporting them in accessing higher education. KCLWP will be responsible for the day-to-day implementation of interventions and for school recruitment.
* The [Behavioural Insights Team](http://www.behaviouralinsights.co.uk) (BIT) started life as the world’s first government institution dedicated to the application of behavioural sciences to public policy. BIT is now a social-purpose company and will be responsible for evaluating the effectiveness of the interventions.
* Students from Harvard Business School conceived of this project on an immersive field course last year. We are working with one recent graduate, Erin Frey, on further developing the interventions and the trial.

*Who do I contact to get involved or learn more?*

Please contact Eleri Burnhill (eleri.burnhill@kcl.ac.uk), Evaluation Advisor at KCL. It would be very helpful if you could indicate whether your school (1) issues termly reports and (2) issues school/parent contracts (or may be open to doing so).

*Example school/parent contract (additional commitments highlighted in red boxes)*

Parent Signature: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Discussed with child on (date): \_\_\_\_\_\_\_

*Please sign one copy of this contract and have your child return to their Form Tutor by [DATE]*

Dear Parent/Guardian,

We value your role in helping your child achieve high academic standards. The purpose of the school-parent contract is to communicate a common understanding of home and school responsibilities to assure that every student attains a quality education.

The following information will serve as an outline of various ways you and the school staff can build and maintain a partnership of shared responsibility for your child’s learning.

Our goal is to ensure all students attain the necessary academic credentials to be eligible to attend higher education.

***In signing this contract, you agree to work with your child to attain the necessary academic credentials required to be eligible for accessing university or other forms of further education.***

**School’s Responsibility:**

* Provide quality curriculum and instruction in a supportive and effective learning environment that enables the children to meet academic standards
* Provide you with assistance in understanding academic achievement standards and assessments and how to monitor your child’s progress
* Provide opportunities for ongoing communication between you and your child’s teachers
* Provide a safe and secure learning environment

**Parent’s Responsibility:**

* Ensure that my child attends school daily and arrives to school on time
* Encourage my child to follow the rules and regulations of the school
* Celebrate my child’s hard work, effort, achievement and successes
* Monitor my child’s homework by encouraging completion and helping when appropriate
* Provide a quiet learning environment and equipment for my child to study at home
* Attend parent/teacher meetings and participate, when appropriate, in discussions relating to the education of my child
* Communicate positive information regarding teachers, administration, and other campus personnel when discussing school with my child
* Read all notes and letters from school and respond appropriately
* Encourage my child to make as full use as possible of all the opportunities whilst at school
* Discuss aspirations and expectations of higher education attainment with my child

*Example cover letter for school report*

Dear Parent/Guardian,

***Your child is on track to attend university.***

[He/she] shows very high potential in **Maths, History, and Music**.

If your child continues to do well in GCSE and A-level **History**, [he/she] may have the option of taking the following courses at university:

* *War Studies & History, King’s College London*
* *Business Studies and Sociology, University of Manchester*
* *Law, Royal Holloway, University of London*

This could lead to the following careers:

* *Teacher*
* *Journalist*
* *Civil service*
* *Business management*

To continue the conversation about university, ask your child’s teacher.