**Project reference: PGT-13327**

**Cardiff Metropolitan University, Cardiff School of Sport and Health Sciences**

# PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET

How well do parents and caregivers understand growth and maturation in children aged 4 to 18 in Malta? A quantitative cross-sectional study.

Version 4, 10 November 2026

**Invitation**

You are being invited to take part in a research study. Before you decide, it is important that you understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please read the following information carefully, take as much time as you need to decide, and ask the researcher if anything is unclear.

**What is the purpose of the study?**

The study looks at how well parents and legal guardians in Malta understand children's growth and maturation, and what information or support they would find useful. It is conducted as part of an MSc Youth Athletic Development at Cardiff Metropolitan University.

**Why have I been invited?**

You have been invited because you are a parent or legal guardian aged 18 or over with at least one child aged 4 to 18 living in Malta or Gozo.

You may have seen the invitation through a school, club, community group, another parent, social media or a paid advert. Some invitations appear on the researcher’s My Personal Trainer Malta business accounts or website. This is University research, and choosing whether to take part will not affect any coaching service or your child’s opportunities at school or club. The survey does not ask who you are or how you know the researcher.

**Do I have to take part?**

Taking part is voluntary. You can withdraw before submitting by closing the browser or leaving the survey unsubmitted; no form or explanation is needed. The survey may temporarily save progress. Unsubmitted responses will not be analysed and will be automatically deleted after 7 days of no edits. Once you have submitted an anonymous response, that response cannot be withdrawn because no name, contact details or participant withdrawal code is collected. Choosing not to take part will not disadvantage you or your child.

**What will taking part involve?**

You will complete one anonymous online questionnaire, which takes about ten to twelve minutes and is available in Maltese and English. It asks about your understanding of growth and maturation, your views, your child's growth-related experiences, where you get information, and what education you would value. You answer about one child only. Please do not include any names or other identifying details about yourself or your child in your answers.

**Information about your child**

You will report your observations about one child, including growth spurts, aches or pains, confidence and conversations about development. No name, diagnosis or physical measurement is requested, and your child will not be contacted. These topics may be sensitive even though the questions use broad categories. You may skip them. Child assent is not sought because the child is not directly involved; Please do not provide identifying details about yourself or your child.

**Are there any risks?**

The risks are minimal. Some questions touch on your child's growth and health, which a few parents may find prompts mild concern. The survey is not a medical assessment and does not diagnose anything. If any question raises a concern about your child's growth, development or health, please speak to your family doctor or paediatrician; you can also contact Malta's national Supportline on 179. A reminder of these sources is shown at the end of the survey.

If you comment on the study's social media posts, your comment can be seen by others. Please do not post personal details about yourself or your child; the researcher will hide or remove such comments on posts they control and request removal elsewhere. Copies may already have been seen by others.

**Are there any benefits?**

There is no direct benefit to you, but your responses may help schools, clubs, coaches and healthcare providers give clearer information to parents.

**What will happen to the results?**

Responses will be analysed in grouped form. The required consent at the start covers survey participation only. A separate optional question after consent (Q1b in English / M1b in Maltese) asks whether your anonymous answers may be used in the researcher's MSc dissertation and in any resulting presentations or publications. You can continue with the survey whichever answer you choose. If you answer No, your answers may remain recorded anonymously but will be excluded from the dissertation, presentations and publications during data cleaning. No names or individual profiles will be published, and small categories will be combined or suppressed where necessary to reduce disclosure risk.

After analysis, a short summary of grouped findings will be posted on the researcher’s social media pages and study page at mypersonaltrainermalta.com/parents-knowledge-growth-maturation/. There is no email sign-up and no need to provide contact details to see the summary.

**How will my data and privacy be protected?**

No names or contact details are requested in the survey. Please do not include anything that could identify you or your child. Qualtrics will be configured to exclude IP addresses and geolocation from the research response dataset; hosting and survey providers may process technical information to operate their services. Access to

responses is restricted to the researcher and supervisor through University systems, with service providers processing information as needed to provide those systems. Research exports are stored in Cardiff Met OneDrive. Responses will be retained for ten years after the programme end date and then securely deleted under University procedures

The survey link you used may include a short label showing only the type of channel it was shared through (for example, social media or email). This label is stored with your answers so that the researcher can see which channels reach parents. It does not identify you, the person who shared the link or any organisation.

If you reached the survey through a social media post or advert, the platform (for example Facebook or Instagram) may record that you saw the post or clicked the link, under its own privacy policy. The research team will not share your survey answers with these platforms or attempt to match their engagement information to your answers. No advertising pixel will be added to the survey.

**Contact and complaints**

If you have questions about the study, contact the researcher, Marvic Debono Le Prevost (st20342401@outlook.cardiffmet.ac.uk), or the supervisor, Dr John Radnor (jradnor@cardiffmet.ac.uk). If you wish to raise a concern or complaint about how the study has been conducted, please contact the Cardiff Metropolitan University ESSH Ethics team at ESSHEthics@cardiffmet.ac.uk.

The Participant Information Sheet and the consent statements are available to read on this screen and to download (PDF or printable view) before you answer Yes or No to consent.

Thank you for taking the time to read this information.

# PARTICIPANT CONSENT STATEMENTS

**Cardiff Metropolitan University, Cardiff School of Sport and Health Sciences**

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Version 4, 10 November 2026. Consent is recorded electronically at the start of the questionnaire, which shows the statements below exactly as written here. The Participant Information Sheet and these consent statements are available to read and download (PDF or printable view) before the Yes/No consent decision. No signature is collected, to preserve anonymity.

**Please read these following statements:**

- I have read and understood the Participant Information Sheet (Version 4, 10 November 2026) and have had the chance to ask questions.

- I am aged 18 or over and a parent or legal guardian of a child aged 4 to 18 living in Malta or Gozo.

- I understand that I may skip substantive questions or stop before submitting, that incomplete responses will not be analysed and will be deleted as described in the information sheet, and that submitted responses cannot be located for withdrawal.

• I understand that I am reporting observations about one child, that some questions concern growth-related experiences and wellbeing, and that my child will not be contacted, assessed or measured.

• I understand how my responses will be stored and reported, as explained in the information sheet.

**I confirm all of the above and agree to take part.**

Separate optional question after consent (asked in the survey as Q1b): I agree that my anonymous answers may be used in the researcher's MSc dissertation and in any resulting presentations or publications. You can continue with the survey whichever answer you choose. If you answer No, your answers may remain recorded anonymously but will be excluded from the dissertation, presentations and publications during data cleaning. This question is not part of the required main consent; No does not end the survey.

## WITHDRAWAL INFORMATION

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If you contact the researcher separately by email, your correspondence will be handled as an identifiable administrative record, separately from survey answers. It will not be used to identify your response. You can ask about its handling using the University contacts in the information sheet.

No withdrawal form required

No name, signature or contact details are required to leave the survey.