

CONSENT FORM

You are invited to participate in a research project entitled “Students’ observations of the acceptance and safety of sexual minority students in Saskatchewan secondary schools.” Please read this form carefully, and feel free to contact the researchers prior to beginning the study should you have ANY questions.

Researchers:

Don Cochrane, M.A., Professor Emeritus, Department of Educational Foundations, E-M: don.cochrane@usask.ca, Tel: 966-7521.

Melanie Morrison, PhD, Department of Psychology, E-M: melanie.morrison@usask.ca; Tel: 966-2564.

Purpose and Procedure: The purpose of the study is to document whether high-school aged students perceive their schools to be safe and welcoming for those students who are, or perceived to be, gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, or questioning (GLBTQ).

Once you have read the Consent Form and indicated that you have understood it, you will be invited to proceed to the survey by clicking on the link appearing at the bottom of the screen. Once introduced to the survey, you will notice specific instructions to be followed for different items. If you have any questions about the instructions, do not hesitate to contact either Don or Melanie; our contact information is found above. Because this is an online survey, you have some flexibility about where you complete it (e.g., at home, an Internet cafe, etc.). It is anticipated the survey will not take longer than 30 minutes to complete. Although your feedback is sent to a particular site, we do not have any way of knowing *who* responded, where the surveys were completed, and so forth. In fact, the information comes to us labeled simply as “Students’ observations”.

Given the importance of the topics covered in the study, we will summarize the observations that we are given and present them to other academics, university and high-school student groups, and organizations in our communities that might be interested.

Potential Benefits: By participating in the study, it is likely that you will not necessarily receive any direct benefits. However, you may experience some positive satisfaction in contributing information about these issues and, thereby, supporting research of this nature. From a research vantage, you are helping to increase understanding of school climates and the types of experiences had by high-school aged students. Further, your contribution will be useful when we are comparing responses from students to those that we have collected previously from teachers.

Potential Risks: As research with any adolescents could be viewed as sensitive, we are taking all precautions to ensure that you are informed about the nature of the study and that you can access support from the researchers at any time prior to, during, or after your participation. As the survey is examining school climate, this topic may be sensitive for some. Although the survey is unlikely to cause any serious discomfort, we wish to minimize feelings of isolation, and or feelings that you lack social support to discuss these issues openly. We will do our best to assist you in any way possible, and can make referrals to organizations and counseling services should you require them.

Storage of Data: The survey material will be safeguarded and securely stored by Melanie Morrison in her lab located in the Department of Psychology at the University of Saskatchewan for a minimum of five years.

Confidentiality: Although the data from this research project will be published and presented at conferences, it will be reported in aggregate form, so that it will not be possible to identify individuals and their geographic locations. Where there are direct quotations coming from any participants' responses, all identifying information (e.g., geographic location of participant, individually identifying information) will be removed. However, to ensure that the survey process remains anonymous, your data cannot be returned once it has been submitted.

Right to Withdraw: Your participation is voluntary, and you can answer only those questions that you are comfortable with. The information that is shared will be held in strict confidence and discussed only with the research team. You may withdraw from the research project for any reason, at any time, without penalty of any sort (e.g., withdrawing from the study will not affect your access to services, opportunity to participate in school groups, organizations, and so forth). If you withdraw from the research project at any time, all of the data that you have contributed will be deleted and destroyed.

Questions: If you have any questions concerning the research project, please feel free to ask at any point; you are also free to contact the researchers at the numbers provided if you have other questions. Any questions regarding your rights as a participant may be addressed to that committee through the Ethics Office (306-966-2084). Out-of-town participants may call collect.

Follow-Up or Debriefing:

Participants are invited to follow-up with the researchers to obtain a summary sheet of the key findings emerging from the study. As we will not be able to track individual participants, you will have to be pro-active in this regard. However, we will post reminders on the web domain to contact the researchers for study results.

Consent to Participate: I have read and understood the description provided. I have had an opportunity to ask questions and, if I have done so, they have been answered. I consent to participate in the research project, understanding that I may withdraw my

consent at any time. I understand that I can print a copy of this Consent Form for my records.

We will consider your having read and agreeing with these assurances as equivalent to signing a consent form.

This research project was reviewed and approved by the University of Saskatchewan Behavioural Research Ethics Board on January 5, 2008.