**Information Letter: COVID-19 Risks and Procedures for In-Person Research at McMaster University**

Principal Investigator: name, dept, phone, email

OR

Student Principal Investigator: name, dept, phone, email

Faculty Supervisor: name, dept, phone, email

Study Title: insert study title (the “Study”)

COVID-19 Risks

In light of the current global COVID-19 pandemic, Canadian public health authorities have strongly recommended that everyone takes additional precautions, including those outlined in this letter. McMaster University is attempting to limit the risk of exposure to COVID-19 by using reasonable efforts to follow the health and safety guidelines recommended by the provincial and federal health authorities. Nevertheless, there remains a risk that by attending McMaster University campus or any of the McMaster University Study sites, you may contract COVID-19. COVID-19 can result in severe illness, medical expenses, loss of income and death. The university has taken every reasonable precaution and implemented guidance documents and COVID-19 precautions in our buildings for our community

Please read the following statements carefully and feel free to ask questions if anything seems unclear. Your participation in this study is voluntary and you can withdraw from the study at any time by notifying the researcher.

COVID-19 Guidance and Required Precautions

The University has placed guidance and precautions in place for your health and safety while on campus. This includes but is not limited to McMaster Vaccination Policy for Faculty, Staff and Students as well as McMaster Vaccination Policy for Visitors. The requirements will be provided to you prior to arrival and include the following:

The location for this Study, McMaster University – insert campus/facility name, e.g., Main Campus (the “Study Site”), is under the jurisdiction of Public Health Ontario. In order to help reduce the risk of spreading COVID-19, McMaster University is following Public Health Ontario directions and in addition, taking the following safety precautions:

* McMaster student, or employee, research participants: You will complete the COVID-19 screening process through [MacCheck](https://maccheck.mcmaster.ca/) on the day of your participation in the Study, and it must be completed no more than 1 hour before you come to campus. You must pass the Daily Check to have approval to come to campus. If you do not receive approval, then contact the research team to inform them you cannot attend.
* Research participants external to McMaster: At least 24 hours before the day of your participation in the Study, you must submit proof of vaccination, and it only needs to be submitted once. If a Volunteer as defined under the McMaster University Vaccination Policy for Visitors requires an exemption, the request must be submitted as soon as possible and no less than 72 hours before the individual is needed on University Property. In addition, at least 1 hr prior to your arrival, you must complete the [Ontario COVID-19 self-assessment tool](https://covid-19.ontario.ca/self-assessment/) and confirm that the result indicates that “you do not need to self-isolate or get tested.” If this is not the case, you should contact the research team to inform them you cannot attend.
* All research team members will follow [McMaster’s Workplace Health and Safety Guidance](https://hr.mcmaster.ca/resources/covid19/workplace-health-and-safety-guidance-during-covid-19/) as well as McMaster Vaccination Policies.
* All researchers and participants will be required to wear [a face-covering or mask](https://hr.mcmaster.ca/optional-non-medical-masks-and-facing-coverings/) in indoor public spaces at all McMaster locations and when unable to follow physical distancing guidelines. A mask is required for all indoor spaces on campus and there is an expectation you will have your own mask. If you do not, please let us know and we can ensure you receive one prior to entering a building.
* Maintaining a distance of 2m or more from participants, unless some Study procedures require closer distance or contact briefly (e.g., fitting an eye-tracking headset).
* Sanitizing of high-touch surfaces and/or shared equipment between each participant appointment.
* The above safety protocols should be standard for all studies. Please add to the list any additional COVID-19 safety protocols unique to your study, (e.g., marking on floor for 2M distance, plexiglass barriers between participants, use of face shields).

McMaster Vaccination Mandate

Persons attending a McMaster campus or facility to participate in a research study are expected to adhere to the McMaster vaccination mandate.

Student, faculty, and staff research participants: This group of research participants follows the [vaccination policy for employees and students](https://secretariat.mcmaster.ca/app/uploads/Vaccination-Policy-COVID-19-Requirements-for-Employees-and-Students.pdf). To attend the research study you must have approval, through [MacCheck](https://maccheck.mcmaster.ca/), to attend University Property. You will show your green MacCheck clearance check mark to the researcher prior to participating.

Research participants from outside the McMaster community: This group of research participants follows the [vaccination policy for visitors](https://secretariat.mcmaster.ca/app/uploads/Vaccination-Policy-COVID-19-Requirements-for-Visitors.pdf) and are considered in the “volunteer” category for the purposes of the policy. To attend the research study, you must have approval to attend University Property. You can obtain approval through the [McMaster Safety App](https://security.mcmaster.ca/safety-app/), which provides access to MacCheck. You can also access the MacCheck tool directly through a web browser using [this link.](https://mcmaster.apparmor.com/webapp/default.aspx?menu=MacCheck) You will show your approval message obtained through the McMaster Safety App or through the web-based MacCheck tool.

For all participants, your approval through MacCheck can be obtained through proof of full vaccination or by receiving an exemption and following additional COVID-19 testing requirements. Researchers will only know that you have approval to be on campus, and not whether that is due to being vaccinated or from receiving an exemption. Until it is possible for children under the age of 12 to be fully vaccinated, they may participate in research without providing proof of vaccination or going through the exemption process. It will take at least 24 hours for proof of vaccination to be validated through MacCheck, and a request for an exemption should be submitted at least 72 hours before you attend campus.

If you anticipate having a technical difficulty obtaining approval or showing the researcher your confirmation of approval via MacCheck or the McMaster Safety App (e.g., no access to a smartphone, no access to campus wi-fi), then please let the researcher know ahead of time. The researcher will determine an alternative way for you to obtain and/or show approval.

Collection of Contact Information

In addition to the above, McMaster University will be collecting personal contact information that we shall retain and use only to support contact tracing, which will be done, where required, by public health authorities. Contact information will be stored securely and separately from research data, then destroyed within a period of one month.

Additional COVID-19 Precautions

As a Study participant, it is expected that you also follow Public Health Ontario directives, McMaster University requirements and in addition requested that you follow the following procedures. Please do everything you can to follow these health-related procedures and directives, to protect yourself and others.

* Avoid touching your face with unwashed hands.
* Avoid physical contact with other individuals to the extent possible.
* Advise a researcher if you believe a safety measure is not being taken, or that safety is at risk.
* Attend the Study alone, or if needed, bring only one support person/parent.
* If taking public transit for this visit, please follow all guidelines from the transit service and public health, such as face masking/covering and hand sanitizing.
* Consider using the washroom before leaving home. Notify the researcher of any washroom needs. Washroom capacity is limited to allow physical distancing.
* **If you are feeling unwell or experiencing any potential COVID-19 symptoms, then please stay home and notify a member of the Study team that you cannot attend**. Contact information can be found on the Letter of Information that you were sent. Examples of potential COVID-19 symptoms are noted at the end of this document.

Additional Information and Consent

The government of Canada provides [information on COVID-19 risks and prevention](https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/2019-novel-coronavirus-infection/prevention-risks.html?&utm_campaign=gc-hc-sc-coronavirus2021-ao-2021-0005-10680758527&utm_medium=search&utm_source=google_grant-ads-108388744754&utm_content=text-en-434601690167&utm_term=%2Bcovid) and on taking care of your [mental health during the COVID-19 pandemic](https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/2019-novel-coronavirus-infection/mental-health.html).

A copy of this letter will be provided upon arrival to the Study Site. You will be asked to sign it in the presence of a member of the research team.

Please sign and date this form if you acknowledge and accept the information outlined above about risks of COVID-19 exposure and the related safety measures in place, completed the [Ontario COVID-19 self-assessment tool](https://covid-19.ontario.ca/self-assessment/) no more than an hour before coming to campus (or, for McMaster students and employees, completed the Daily Check in MacCheck), and are willing to participate in the Study at the Study Site. By signing this document, you confirm that you have read the information above and had an opportunity to ask questions.

□ I acknowledge:

* I am not experiencing any potential Covid-19 symptoms, including without limitation new or worsening cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, temperature equal to or over 38C (100.4F), feeling feverish, chills, fatigue or weakness, muscle or body aches, new loss of smell or taste, headache, gastrointestinal symptoms (abdominal pain, diarrhea, vomiting), or feeling very unwell.
* In the last 14 days, I have not travelled outside Canada or had close contact with anyone who has any of the symptoms listed above or a confirmed or presumed case of COVID-19.

Name of participant: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Signature of participant: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Parent/Guardian

(if child cannot provide consent):\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Researcher name: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Researcher signature: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_