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BRIEFING SHEET



Deaf children and Research: a model of good practice and participation

An important agreement on involving deaf children in academic research has recently been coordinated by DCAL. The agreement, which is a model for research ethics, could transform the way deaf children are involved in research.

Schools for deaf children are being faced with an increasing demand for their pupils to be involved in research. Although this research can benefit deaf children it needs to be balanced against the schools desire to ensure they have minimal interruptions to their pupils' education. It should also be relevant to the school's objectives. Both schools and universities shared a desire to

ensure good practice when carrying out research into deaf children's development, and were keen to formalise and improve their relationship.

As the leading academic research centre in the field, DCAL helped bring together a wide range of stakeholders to work out a shared way forward. Key to the project were the British Association of Teachers of the Deaf (BATOD), the Sign Bilingual Consortium and the Frank Barnes School for the Deaf. Collaborators included universities, schools for deaf children and key organisations in the public and voluntary sectors working with deaf children and their families.

This approach meant that there was substantial buy-in from all stakeholders, who have then also helped with disseminating the guidelines to academic researchers and to people working with deaf children.

The resulting agreement is relevant for all deaf children, whether they use sign language or speech to communicate. It ensures that everyone takes care in managing their relationships for the benefit of all involved, especially children.

The guidelines can be downloaded at <http://www.dcal.ucl.ac.uk/documents/GPA.pdf>