

# Evaluation of STEM Horizons Computer Science Partnerships

## Parent/Carer Information and Withdrawal Form

Dear Parent / Guardian,

We are writing to let you know that your child's school is participating in an evaluation of the STEM Horizons Computer Science Partnerships programme which will involve independent schools collaborating with state partner schools to enhance students' attainment and experiences of GCSE Computer Science.

### Who is conducting the study?

The Hg Foundation has commissioned and funded this programme and its evaluation. The STEM Horizons team will coordinate the day-to-day running and monitoring of the programme. The National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER) will be evaluating the programme.

### What is the STEM Horizons Computer Science partnerships programme?

The STEM Horizons Computer Science Partnerships programme will involve independent schools partnering with state schools in their local area to form 'hubs'. A specialist computer science teacher from each independent school will work with partner schools to deliver a high-quality and enriching computer science curriculum and inspirational events with the aim of improving students' attainment in GCSE Computer Science and take up of STEM subjects. Your child's school has chosen to take part in the programme and its evaluation.

### How will the programme be evaluated?

In order to evaluate the effectiveness of the programme, it will be crucial to understand what activities are delivered in practice and who is involved, what difference it makes to students' outcomes, and what all those involved in the programme think of it. All schools taking part in the programme will be asked to contribute to evaluation requirements.

### What are the evaluation activities for my child?

The evaluation will include the following key activities for students in participating schools in Year 10 and 11 who are studying for GCSE Computer Science:

- Data on student attendance at programme activities will be collected by the specialist computer science teacher for each hub. This data will be subsequently pseudonymised and reported to the STEM Horizons team and programme manager as part of its ongoing monitoring of the programme delivery, and then shared securely with NFER for the purposes of evaluation.

- Students who will be in Year 10 in 2026/27 academic year and go into Year 11 in 2027/28 academic year will complete an online survey before and after the programme is delivered.
- In a small number of schools, students will be invited to take part in interviews/focus groups and may be observed taking part in programme activities. Some students in Year 9 who take part in enrichment activities as part of the programme may also be invited to take part in interviews/focus groups.

### What are the benefits of my child taking part?

By participating in the evaluation, state schools will have the opportunity to improve GCSE Computer Science outcomes for their students and contribute to the evidence base that informs efforts to improve education outcomes for all children. If successful, it is hoped the programme will be expanded to more schools and other STEM subjects in the future.

### How will the findings be used?

The evaluation report will be publicly accessible on the Hg Foundation website upon completion.

### How will my child's data be used?

Some basic data about your child will be collected for the purpose of the evaluation (e.g. name, gender, Free School Meals (FSM) eligibility, Age/Year group, attendance and engagement with programme activities and views of computer science/tech/Science Technology Engineering and Maths (STEM) and the programme activities). **No identifiable data about your child will be shared by NFER and data collected will only be used for delivering and evaluating the programme.** All parties comply with the requirements of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and have robust GDPR procedures in place.

Further information about this evaluation can be found on the project web page:

<https://www.nfer.ac.uk/for-schools/participate-in-research/participate-in-research-projects/evaluation-of-stem-horizons-computer-science-partnerships/>. The web page includes links to the evaluation privacy notices, including one for students and their parents/carers. The privacy notice for students and parents/carers summarises what personal data will be collected about your child, and how this data will be collected, used, shared and protected. **No student, school or teacher will be named in any report arising from this work.**

### What do I need to do?

If you are happy for your child's data to be used for this research, **you do not need to do anything.**

Although we value their participation in this evaluation and contribution to important findings, you can withdraw your child from data collection activities at any time. If you withdraw your child from the evaluation, we will use any data we have collected up to that point unless you ask us to delete it. Please note that data deletion will not be possible once data analysis has commenced (from summer term 2026).

Withdrawing from the evaluation will not impact your child's involvement in the STEM Horizons Computer Science Partnerships programme, just their inclusion in the evaluation. If, at this stage, you would prefer your child's data not to be shared, stored and used for this evaluation, please complete the form below and return it to your child's teacher as soon as possible. If you have any queries, please contact us via email at: [StemHorizons@nfer.ac.uk](mailto:StemHorizons@nfer.ac.uk)

Yours sincerely,  
NFER and The STEM Horizons team

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### **Evaluation of STEM Horizons Computer Science Partnerships: Withdrawal form from data processing for parents**

You only need to complete this form if you **DO NOT** wish your child's data to be shared, stored and used for this evaluation.

I **DO NOT** give permission for data about my child that is collected as part of the delivery or evaluation of the STEM Horizons Computer Science Partnerships programme to be stored or used for research purposes.

Your child's name .....

Name of school .....

Your full name .....

Your signature .....Date.....