

## Consent Form

**Title of the Project:** How Homeschooling Happens: A Phenomenological Study of Educational Practices in the Home Education Setting

**Principal Investigator:** Bridgette Whitlow-Spurlock, Ed. D; Ph.D. Candidate; Liberty University

### Invitation to be Part of a Research Study

You are invited to participate in a research study. In order to participate, you must be at least 18 years old and a home educator with 3 years of experience. You must be the individual legally responsible for providing the home education for the student(s), which can include parents, grandparents, guardians, or other caregivers based on your local regulations for home education. Additionally, you must meet the definition of home education: parent-funded, parent-chosen, and parent-directed. Those using full-time virtual public or private schools do not meet these criteria; however, those using part-time virtual schools do. Taking part in this research project is voluntary. Please take time to read this entire form and ask questions before deciding whether to take part in this research project.

### What is the study about and why is it being done?

The purpose of the study is to examine the educational processes that occur in the homeschool environment. Additionally, this study will expand a theory of home education, which was based on the experiences of those who homeschool gifted and twice-exceptional children, to the general homeschool population.

### What will happen if you take part in this study?

If you agree to be in this study, I would ask you to do the following things:

1. Allow the researcher to use your responses from the screening survey. The information disclosed in the screening survey will be used for descriptive purposes.
2. Participate in an interview. This interview will take place via a web conferencing app or website, such as Microsoft Teams, Zoom, or Google Hangouts, and it will be recorded for transcription purposes. The interview will last approximately one hour.
3. Complete participant journals. You will be provided four participant journal prompts to record your experiences with the processes of homeschooling (for each child). This will take approximately one hour (per child).
4. You will be provided a vignette about Diogenes, to which you will be asked three questions to give a written response to. This process should take 30 minutes.
5. After the interviews have been transcribed, you will be asked to review the transcripts for accuracy and to correct any misunderstandings. This process should take 15 minutes.

### How could you or others benefit from this study?

There are no direct benefits for participants in this study. However, since participants will be reflecting on their lived experiences, they may develop an understanding of the processes involved in homeschooling. Additionally, participants will receive copies of empirically-based educational processes, which could benefit those who are looking for ways to customize the home education experience for their children.

Benefits to society include a deeper understanding of the homeschooling population, empirical evidence for researchers, and explanations of homeschooling for stakeholders. Modern homeschooling is an under-researched field; the deeper understanding benefits the homeschooler, the general population, stakeholders, and researchers. The empirical evidence developed through this study will assist all researchers who are not familiar with the nuances of home education to have a better grasp of the educational processes within homeschooling. The stakeholders, policymakers, and advocates will have a better understanding of homeschooling to improve regulations and policies toward the homeschool community.

#### **What risks might you experience from being in this study?**

The risks involved in this study are minimal, which means they are equal to the risks you would encounter in everyday life. Additionally, I am a mandatory reporter. If I become aware of information that triggers the mandatory reporting requirements for child abuse, child neglect, elder abuse, or intent to cause harm to self or others, I must do so immediately.

#### **How will personal information be protected?**

The records of this study will be kept private. Published reports will not include any information that will make it possible to identify a subject. Research records will be stored securely, and only the researcher will have access to the records. Data collected from you may be shared for use in future research studies or with other researchers. If data collected from you is shared, any information that could identify you, if applicable, will be removed before the data is shared.

- Participant responses will be kept confidential through the use of participant-selected, culturally relevant pseudonyms. Interviews will be conducted in a location where others will not easily overhear the conversation.
- Data will be stored on a password-locked computer and external hard drive and may be used in future studies, presentations, or books without identifying information. After three years, all electronic records will be deleted. Hard copy data will be stored in a safe and destroyed after three years.
- Interviews will be recorded and transcribed. Recordings will be stored on a password-locked computer and external hard drive for three years and then erased. Only the researcher will have access to these recordings.

#### **How will you be compensated for being part of the study?**

Participants will not be compensated for participating in this study.

#### **Is study participation voluntary?**

Participation in this study is voluntary. Your decision whether to participate will not affect your current or future relations with Liberty University. If you decide to participate, you are free to not answer any question or withdraw at any time without affecting those relationships.

### **What should you do if you decide to withdraw from the study?**

If you choose to withdraw from the study, please contact the researcher at the email address included in the next paragraph. Should you choose to withdraw, data collected from you will be destroyed immediately and will not be included in this study.

### **Whom do you contact if you have questions or concerns about the study?**

The researcher conducting this study is Bridgette Whitlow-Spurlock. You may ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, you are encouraged to contact her at [bwhitlowspurlock@liberty.edu](mailto:bwhitlowspurlock@liberty.edu). You may also contact the researcher's faculty sponsor, Dr. Gail Collins, at [gcollins2@liberty.edu](mailto:gcollins2@liberty.edu).

### **Whom do you contact if you have questions about your rights as a research participant?**

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study and would like to talk to someone other than the researcher, **you are encouraged** to contact the Institutional Review Board, 1971 University Blvd., Green Hall Ste. 2845, Lynchburg, VA 24515 or email at [irb@liberty.edu](mailto:irb@liberty.edu).

*Disclaimer: The Institutional Review Board (IRB) is tasked with ensuring that human subjects research will be conducted in an ethical manner as defined and required by federal regulations. The topics covered and viewpoints expressed or alluded to by student and faculty researchers are those of the researchers and do not necessarily reflect the official policies or positions of Liberty University.*

### **Your Consent**

By signing this document, you are agreeing to be in this study. Make sure you understand what the study is about before you sign. You may print a copy of this document for your records. The researcher will keep a copy with the study records. If you have any questions about the study after you sign this document, you can contact the study team using the information provided above.

*I have read and understood the above information. I have asked questions and have received answers. I consent to participate in the study.*

☐ The researcher has my permission to audio/video-record me as part of my participation in this study.

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Printed Subject Name

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Signature & Date