**GUIDANCE FOR TEACHERS**

Thank you for your interest in the *Meaningful Maps* project. The aim of this project is to assemble a collection of maps drawn by children and young people from diverse social backgrounds and geographical settings to provide a unique portrait of places that matter to them. The project is an independent venture run by a volunteer team of geography teacher educators with the support of the Geographical Association (GA) and Canterbury Christ Church University (CCCU) and endorsement from the British Cartographic Society (BCS). The Pilot of this research will take place during the academic year 2017 – 2018. You can read more about the project [here.](http://meaningfulmaps.org/)

**Who can take part?**

We are focusing the trial on children aged 7 – 11 (Key Stage 2) and we welcome entries from any educational setting within the UK and Ireland. You may decide to submit entries from an entire class or from pupils of different age ranges. As the project has a research element, please submit all entries you receive rather than being selective. We suggest a maximum of 50-60 entries per school and would prefer no more than 30.

**How to submit an entry**

Please return completed maps to Stephen Scoffham at Canterbury Christ Church University as hard copies by post (maximum size A3) or by email with a PDF or photograph (high resolution please - at least 1 MB).

Each map will need to be accompanied by a short explanation saying what it shows and why it is significant to the pupil. This statement is additional to the any labels and notes on the map itself. Very young children may simply add a sentence written with adult support. We wouldn’t normally expect the statement to exceed 100-150 words.

Each map will also need to accompanied by a proforma which is available [here](http://meaningfulmaps.org/home/taking-part/) giving details of the pupil’s age, sex etc and granting permission for the work to be archived and reproduced. We will treat each map with complete confidentiality as far as the pupil’s identity is concerned: the project has been approved by the CCCU ethics committee.

**Return address**

Dr Stephen Scoffham, Meaningful Maps, Room Fg10, Canterbury Christ Church University, Kent CT1 1QU

Email: [stephen@meaningfulmaps.org](mailto:stephen@meaningfulmaps.org) Tel: 01227 922367

**FURTHER INFORMATION**

**How do I begin the project?**

Explain to the pupils that they are being invited to take part in a national project about children’s thoughts and feelings about places that matter to them in their local area i.e. outside and immediately beyond their home or school building. The finished maps will be stored electronically so they can be shared with others around the country. They may also be used by researchers or reproduced in a book at some point in the future as people will be interested in their ideas. Please make it clear to children that they are not obliged to take part – **participation is entirely voluntary**. The Teacher Instructions do give clear reference to opportunities within the curriculum so this activity could form part of usual teaching activity.

**What guidance should I give my pupils?**

As a teacher, you will know how much support the class will need to participate in the project. There are no time limits to how long pupils can take to generate their maps which can be completed either in class or at home. We recommend that you talk with the class about different types of maps and how they are useful before you begin, perhaps showing them examples. We also suggest you encourage pupils to discuss their maps as they are making them rather than working in silence and to add labels and writing as well as (or instead of) using keys and symbols.

**What types of map do we want?**

A map is a picture of place which shows the relationship between different features.It is often presented in the form of a diagram using symbols. Depending on their age, pupils will draw maps in a variety of formats and some will want to add imaginative elements. You need to make it clear that there is no’ right’ answer or approach but we ask that maps are grounded in reality. You should also stress that this is not a competition for the neatest or most artistic map, although these traits can certainly enhance a map visually. We are interested in the information the map conveys (and the information it leaves out). The maps can be drawn to any scale: the choice of scale will probably reflect the pupil’s age and experience. You can find some sample pupil maps [here.](http://meaningfulmaps.org/research-findings/)

**What do we mean by ‘local’?**

‘Local’ is a term that varies enormously according to age, range and context (including landscape and topography). For this activity, we suggest that the locality or neighbourhood comprises places near to where children live and/or go to school and which they know something about either through first-hand experience or through reputation. In addition, pupils could map places in the locality/neighbourhood they have not visited if they think they are significant and meaningful. For example, perhaps they might select a dangerous quarry nearby that is out of bounds, or a busy road interchange they avoid on foot. Understanding what ‘local’ means to children of different ages will emerge from this research so we are not proposing a given area or radius as part of this guidance

**What do we mean by ‘places that matter’?**

We recognise that places matter to people for different reasons. Personal views and perceptions are a central part of the project. This means you should encourage pupils to record what they feel about places as well as the features which they think are significant. Affective maps which focus on personal responses are central to this project. You could ask the pupils to think about places which they enjoy visiting or where they feel safe and happy as well as places that matter because they are perhaps scary or unpleasant. They might select places where they do activities such as play, swim, skateboard, watch animals and so forth. Or they might focus on places where they met their friends or visit relatives. It is quite likely that pupils will decide to draw maps of their own home and street, their school and places in the locality where their friends and relatives live. Others may select local parks, play areas, or even their garden. Some simple question prompts are: *Where is it? What is like? What is called? What happens there? What kind of feature is it? How do I feel about it and why?*