



CONDUCTING RESEARCH WITH WRDSB

Legal References:	<i>Education Act</i> <i><u>Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act</u></i> <i>Anti-Racism Act</i> <i>Personal Information Protection and Electronic Documents Act</i>
Related References:	<i><u>Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans</u></i> (TCPS 2, 2022) <i><u>WRDSB Information for Researchers</u></i> <i>Board Policy 1014 - Privacy Protection and Access to Information</i> <i>Administrative Procedure 4340 - Approval of Research Projects</i> <i>Administrative Procedure 1100 - Privacy Protection and Access to Information</i> <i>Administrative Procedure 3770 - Criminal Reference Checks</i>
Effective Date:	<i>February 23, 1998</i>
Revisions:	<i>November 28, 2005, December 9, 2019, June 19, 2023</i>
Reviewed:	<i>January 22, 2018</i>

1. Preamble

- 1.1 The Waterloo Region District School Board (WRDSB) allows authorized research personnel to use its facilities and invite students, staff and/or families/caregivers from the WRDSB to take part in research provided that:
 - 1.1.1 the research has been reviewed and has received approval from the WRDSB Research Review Committee;
 - 1.1.2 the research follows the guidelines outlined in this policy including ethical guidelines described in the Tri-Council Policy Statement of Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans TCPS 2;
 - 1.1.3 there are no exceptional circumstances (e.g., guidance from the Ministry of Education, public health directives, labour disruptions) that require a pause to be placed on conducting research;
 - 1.1.4 the research follows federal and provincial legislation governing the collection, use, disclosure and retention of personal information, including consent requirements, data security and data disposal.
- 1.2 The WRDSB considers any activity where researchers collect information/data from WRDSB students, staff, and/or families/caregivers as research that must be reviewed and approved by the WRDSB Research Review Committee.
- 1.3 The WRDSB recognizes that conducting research that is related to student learning and education can take a number of forms, including:

- 1.3.1 academic research conducted by college/university faculty members or students who are completing a degree or diploma,
 - 1.3.2 program evaluations or research conducted by community organizations or nonprofit research organizations,
 - 1.3.3 research conducted by the Ontario Ministry of Education or arms-length Ministry organizations (e.g., Education Quality and Accountability Office (EQAO), School Mental Health Ontario),
 - 1.3.4 research or inquiries conducted by WRDSB educators or school principals as part of Additional Qualification courses, Principal Qualification Program courses, and graduate degrees, and
 - 1.3.5 research conducted by for-profit companies.
- 1.4 The WRDSB appreciates that by allowing researchers to conduct research related to student learning and education more broadly that:
- 1.4.1 students, staff and/or families/caregivers may benefit in a number of ways by taking part in research; and
 - 1.4.2 the results of research conducted with WRDSB students, staff, and/or families/caregivers may help to inform decision making at WRDSB.
- 1.5 Internal projects conducted by the Research & Organizational Transformation Department to support the WRDSB Strategic Plan and Board Improvement and Equity Plan follow the ethical guidelines described in the Tri-Council Policy Statement of Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans.

2. Application of Core Principles

- 2.1 This policy is guided by the following three core principles of the Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans (Chapter 1, Section B. Article 1.1, TCPS 2, 2018): respect for persons, concern for welfare, and justice.
- These three core principles are reflected in the following requirements of research conducted with WRDSB students, staff, and/or families/caregivers:
- 2.1.1 the participation of WRDSB students, staff, and/or families/caregivers in research is voluntary, and must be communicated as such,
 - 2.1.2 researchers must obtain active, informed consent from WRDSB students, staff, and/or families/caregivers. For students younger than 18 years of age, researchers must obtain consent from the student's family/caregiver, and
 - 2.1.3 the decision to participate in research must be informed.
- 2.2 For participants (i.e., students, staff, and/or families/caregivers) to make an informed decision about taking part in research, researchers must provide the following information in plain language that is free of jargon and technical language:
- 2.2.1 the purpose of the research,
 - 2.2.2 a description of what taking part in the research involves, including the amount of time required to take part,
 - 2.2.3 the potential risks to taking part in the research and the steps researchers will take to reduce these risks,
 - 2.2.4 the potential benefits of taking part in the research,
 - 2.2.5 the steps that researchers will take to protect the confidentiality and security of the information participants provide, including the length of time the information will be kept by the researchers,
 - 2.2.6 the name and contact information of the researcher so that participants may ask any questions they have about the research and have their questions answered.

- 2.3 Students, staff, and/or families/caregivers are free not to take part in research and may stop taking part in research at any time without penalty. A participant's decision to not take part or stop taking part in research will not have an impact on their relationship or standing with their school, department, the board, the researcher or the researcher's institution/organization.