



APPROVAL OF RESEARCH PROJECTS

Responsibility:	Associate Director of Education Senior Manager, Research and Evidence-based Practice
Legal References:	Education Act Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act Anti-Racism Act Personal Information Protection and Electronic Documents Act
Related References:	Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans (TCPS 2, 2018) WRDSB Information for Researchers Business Code of Conduct
Effective Date:	December 2019
Revisions:	
Reviewed:	

1. Preamble

- 1.1. The following procedure outlines details for permitting authorized research personnel to use Waterloo Region District School Board (WRDSB) facilities and involve students, employees and/or caregivers from the WRDSB in various research projects *provided* that:
- the research has received prior approval of the Research Review Committee,
 - the research adheres to the guidelines outlined in this procedure and the accompanying Board Policy 4007, including ethical guidelines as set out by the Tri-Council Policy Statement of Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans TCPS 2,
 - the number of requests to conduct research in schools is of sufficient quantity to require some kind of control in order to permit schools to fulfill their main role of providing students with first class public education, and
 - the research is being conducted in accordance with 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 all activities where external researchers are endeavouring to collect information/data from WRDSB students, staff, and/or families as research that is subject to review by and approval from the WRDSB Research Review Committee.

2. WRDSB Research Review Process

- 2.1 To conduct research with WRDSB, researchers must submit an electronic application according to the application deadlines outlined on the WRDSB website at: <https://www.wrdsb.ca/about-the-wrdsb/research/information-for-researchers/>
- 2.2 All research conducted with WRDSB students, staff and caregivers must be reviewed and approved by the WRDSB Research Review Committee. This includes:
- research conducted in with WRDSB students, staff and/or families in person in WRDSB schools/on WRDSB property;
 - the recruitment of WRDSB students, staff and/or families to participate online or in person at a location outside WRDSB such as a university research facility; and
 - requests to access and utilize existing WRDSB student or staff data only.

- 2.3 The Board's Research Review Committee team is chaired by a member of the WRDSB's Research and Evidence-based Practice department and will include administrators, a representative from the Waterloo Region Assembly of Public School Councils or the Parent Involvement Committee and other WRDSB staff on an ad hoc basis.
- 2.4 The WRDSB Research Review Committee considers the following questions in reviewing each research application:
- Does the research meet the ethical guidelines set out by the most recent Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans (TCPS 2 2018)?
 - Is the research appropriate for a school/educational context?
 - Does the research place realistic demands on participants (e.g., amount of time required for participation) and schools/the system (e.g., number of participants/schools) with minimal disruption to normal school programming, student learning, and/or staff work?
 - Does the research align with the strategic priorities and operational goals of the WRDSB?
 - Does the research have practical value for students, staff, and/or families, or have broader educational value?
 - Has the researcher provided sufficient detail about the proposed research so that prospective participants can make an informed decision about taking part?
- 2.5 After review by the WRDSB Research Review Committee, researchers are notified by the committee chair one of the following three decisions:
- the application is rejected;
 - the application is conditionally approved and the researcher makes revisions in consultation with the committee chair to bring the application to the point of approval; or
 - the application is approved.
- 2.6 The approval of the research application, which is confirmed with a final approval letter provided by the committee chair:
- allows external researchers begin to contact school administrators/department managers directly to inquire about their interest in supporting the research with WRDSB students and/or staff;
 - does not guarantee that the research will be accommodated by WRDSB schools/departments. Support for the research being conducted in the school or department is at the discretion of the administrator(s) or manager, with the final decision to participate resting with the staff, families and/or students;
 - expires on August 31st of the school year in which the research was approved. Researchers conducting multi-year projects must re-apply to continue their research with WRDSB.
- 2.7 Superintendents and administrators will have access to a list of approved research projects.
- 2.8 As part of their approval to conduct research with WRDSB, researchers agree to provide a summary of the results of their research upon completion, and superintendents and administrators will have access to these summaries.

3. Conducting Research with WRDSB Schools and/or Departments

- 3.1 Approved research may not be conducted during the months of May and June, or the first half of the month of September
- 3.2 Researchers who will be working directly with students in WRDSB schools are required to provide a copy of a Police Vulnerable Sector Records Check that has been prepared by a recognized police force or service and is dated within the past 6 months, consistent with Administrative Procedure 3770 - Criminal Reference Checks. .

- 3.3 Incentives for WRDSB student participation in research are not permitted. Incentives for staff or the school may be considered under the following circumstances:
- the proposed incentives should not be so large or attractive that they unduly induce participation and negate the voluntary nature of the participant's consent (see Article 3.1, TCPS 2);
 - incentives for participating may not be contingent on the number of consent forms returned or the number of participants/participating classrooms at a school;
 - researchers may propose incentives for a staff member's own participation in research provided that the participation takes place outside of work hours;
 - researchers who wish to recognize a school's support of their research may do so through a lump sum contribution to the school's Waterloo Education Foundation Inc. (WEFI) account at: <https://www.wrdsb.ca/wefi/>
- 3.4 As indicated in section 2, meeting the ethical guidelines outlined in the *Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans* (TCPS 2, 2018), the standard for university and non-university ethics review, is one of the factors considered by the WRDSB Research Review Committee in reviewing applications to conduct research with WRDSB. The complete document can be accessed on the Government of Canada website at: http://www.pre.ethics.gc.ca/eng/nr-cp_2019-06-05.html