



**OCREAC**

*Ottawa-Carleton Research and Evaluation Advisory  
Committee*



# **GUIDELINES**

**For Conducting Non-Board-Initiated Research and/or  
Evaluation Projects**

**IN THE**



**OTTAWA-CARLETON  
DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD**

**Ottawa-Carleton District School Board  
133 Greenbank Road ■ Nepean ■ Ontario ■ K2H 6L3**



**OTTAWA  
CATHOLIC  
SCHOOL BOARD**

**Ottawa Catholic School Board  
570 Hunt Club West ■ Nepean ■ Ontario ■ K2G 3R4**

**2018-2019**

## ***Dear Researcher:***

Thank you for your interest in including our students, staff, and/or families in your data collection. These Guidelines apply to all individuals or agencies requesting permission to conduct **non-board-initiated** research/evaluation projects, surveys, or feedback involving students, parents/guardians or staff, on or off school property. To facilitate the process, our two school boards have established the Ottawa-Carleton Research and Evaluation Advisory Committee (OCREAC). The role of the committee is to support and encourage research and evaluation that contributes to educational knowledge, by carefully reviewing proposals to conduct non-board initiated projects. In order to approach any of our schools, an application must first be submitted **and** approved by OCREAC. Approved protocols will receive an approval letter from this committee which will grant permission to approach our schools following the process outlined in these guidelines. ***Please do not approach any staff member prior to receiving an approval from OCREAC.***

## **REVIEW CRITERIA**

### ***The criteria used for reviewing proposals include:***

- Judging the relevance of each request to the educational objectives and priorities of the school board concerned;
- Meets the Tri-Council Policy 2 (2010) criteria for Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans and the Municipal Freedom of Information and Privacy Act (Bill 49, 1989);
- Determining if the methodology is adequate, meets school board policy and OCREAC guidelines, and is rigorous enough to warrant the time allocation; AND
- Determining the impact of each request on the school systems (i.e., the amount of time required by students and staff and the number of students required to complete a project).

*Please note that both school boards reserve the right to reject applications solely on the grounds of each board's priorities at the time.*

## **EXAMPLES OF APPROVED RESEARCH PROJECTS**

In the past, the following types of projects have been approved: those related to curriculum issues; decision-making and leadership; accountability and school improvement; mental/physical health and social issues; technology; teacher pedagogy; program/initiative evaluation; second language learning; assessment and evaluation; and special education. OCREAC will *not* approve proposals that include **market research**.

## **WHO MAY APPLY**

### ***Applications will be accepted from:***

- All Ministry level research/evaluation
- All consultants funded by Ministries
- Institutionally funded projects
- Externally funded projects
- External agencies
- University level research/evaluation
- Master thesis candidates
- Doctoral dissertation candidates
- Organizational partners
- Staff completing educational requirements

## **APPLICATION DEADLINES**

The Ottawa-Carleton Research and Evaluation Advisory Committee meets five times per year. These meetings usually occur three weeks following the deadline with responses typically occurring within 3 weeks after the meeting dates (6 week total turnaround). The DEADLINES for applications are:

**August 31 ▪ October 31 ▪ January 9 ▪ February 28 ▪ April 27**

## **QUESTIONS?**

**Please call or e-mail:**

**Janice Mullen (Research Assistant)**  
Ottawa Catholic School Board  
570 West Hunt Club Road, Nepean, Ontario, K2G 3R4  
[Janice.Mullen@ocsb.ca](mailto:Janice.Mullen@ocsb.ca) (613-224-4455 ext. 2346)

**Send your electronic submission to:**

**Janice Mullen (Research Assistant)**  
Ottawa Catholic School Board  
[Janice.Mullen@ocsb.ca](mailto:Janice.Mullen@ocsb.ca)

## GUIDELINES

*These **Guidelines** apply to **all** individuals or agencies requesting permission to conduct non-board-initiated research or evaluation projects, surveys, or feedback involving students, parents/guardians or staff in the two boards.*

- 1. APPLICATIONS TO COMMITTEE:** All applications for non-board initiated research or evaluation must be reviewed by the OCREAC committee. Researchers who submit applications deemed *incomplete*, or who do not meet the submission *deadline* (see application process below), will be notified that their application will not be reviewed.
- 2. SINGLE APPLICATION:** Research/Evaluation protocols that seek to collect data for *multiple purposes* will not be approved. The ethics approval must clearly match the application protocol. The committee encourages researchers to collaborate on similar research questions.
- 3. STAFF AS RESEARCHERS:** If you are a staff member of either board and are submitting an application to conduct research that falls *outside of your regular duties*, please ensure that your methodology distinguishes your role as “staff member” vs. “researcher” (e.g., other than reflective inquiry/action research, teachers would not typically conduct research with their own students).
- 4. CONTACTING SCHOOLS:** Individuals seeking to access our schools for the purposes of any data collection are not permitted to contact the schools *directly* without first having submitted an application and obtained written approval from the committee (this includes applications undergoing revisions). The committee reserves the right to restrict access to schools for researchers who fail to follow the protocol.
- 5. ACCESS TO SCHOOLS:** In general, researchers will not have access to students or school staff in *May, June or September* due to the large number of activities in schools. Exceptions will be made for those proposals that demonstrate the necessity of access to schools during these months, and are approved sufficiently in advance to allow the schools to plan for the research activity.
- 6. TIMELINES:** Data collection timelines must be *reasonable* and must not place unrealistic demands on the two school boards.
- 7. RESPONSIBILITY OF THE RESEARCH TEAM:** It is the responsibility of the research team to carry out *all duties* pertaining to their research, including the distribution and collection of consent forms, the administration of the tasks, and the debriefing. Protocols that request the use of teacher and/or staff time for any research activities will not be approved. Moreover, participation in the research will not have any financial implications on the schools or the boards (e.g., photocopying, or release time, etc...).
- 8. RECRUITMENT POSTER:** The research/evaluation team should submit a recruitment poster as part of their application. A section on recruitment is included in the application form (*see PART E*).
- 9. POLICE RECORDS CHECK:** If your study involves collecting data in the schools, please note that all research personnel entering a school are required to submit a copy of their *police records check for service with the vulnerable sector* with the application and to carry it with them at all times while in the school. Should research staff change, the Chair of OCREAC must be advised.
- 10. STAFF PRESENCE:** A staff member must be *present at all times* when the research/evaluation is being conducted in a school. Protocols that do not have a staff member present will not be approved.
- 11. APPROVAL PERIOD:** The approval period is for *one school year*. Researchers who are unable to complete their project within the time frame specified must submit a new application which will also include: a project update, a list of participating schools, and a rationale for the extension. *Granting of extensions* is conditional upon availability and interest of the schools in addition to the Board priorities at that time. Your letter of approval must be carried with you at all times and shown to all staff you are working with in the schools.
- 12. STUDY DESIGN:** The design of the study should neither disrupt the school schedule *unduly* nor be detrimental to the participants involved. Studies that require an exceptionally large number of students will not be approved. Furthermore, *longitudinal studies* that request data collection extending beyond a school year will be required to submit a new application each year and are not guaranteed to receive approval. Studies that request to follow-up participants at some time in the future will not be approved.

- 13. CONFIDENTIALITY:** Participating students, families, staff, schools and Boards must be *assured confidentiality*. Under *no* circumstance will researchers *identify the boards or individual schools* in any presentation of results. Researchers must inform the participants who will have access to the information, how the information will be used and stored, and who to contact for more information about the data collected. It is the researcher's responsibility to retain on file, for a minimum of one year, evidence of written consent of all participants in a study.
- 14. COLLECTION OF PERSONAL INFORMATION:** Conditions as outlined in Bill 49, *Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, 1989*, must be adhered to. Personal information may only be obtained as authorized in the Act, used only for the specific purposes for which it is gathered, and be deemed necessary for the adequate interpretation of the research findings. This will include informing study participants when personal information is being collected and how it is being used. Personal information is defined in Bill 49 as: information related to race, religion, age, sex, marital or family status, psychiatric, criminal or employment history, and any identifying number assigned to an individual such as: address, telephone number, email address and personal views of the individual relating to another individual.
- 15. CONSENT:** All researchers are required to use *active consent* (written permission) when seeking participation of students, teachers, and staff and must also seek consent for all mechanisms or formats used for capturing data (e.g., audio/video recording, picture taking). Parental consent is required for all students under the *age of 18*. The parental consent form must describe the types of questions that will be asked of their child in sufficient detail that the parents can determine the relative *risk versus benefit* for their child (e.g., substance use, mental health, etc...). Researchers are not permitted to collect personal information on the consent form that is not deemed necessary for the provision of consent (e.g., birthdates, phone numbers, email, etc...see example provided at the end of this document). Furthermore, researchers will not collect *any* information on participants *who decline to participate* unless a strong justification for linking this information to an outcome measure is provided. Only those *agreeing* to participate will be asked to complete and return a consent form. Researchers are also *not* permitted at any time to seek information that would permit them to contact a student, staff, or family member at some future time.
- 16. RECRUITMENT:** An acceptable justification regarding the need to access participants within a school, rather than at a location in the community is required. Our schools will not be used as a venue for recruitment for marketing research or research/evaluation conducted *off school property or after school hours*. An exception may occur for families who have consented to research that originates at an outside organization (e.g., CHEO) and for which specific information on their child is being requested from their teacher.
- 17. INCENTIVES:** Offering of incentives (e.g., cash cards, stickers, pencils, books etc...) to individual students, staff, or families for participating in research is *not* permitted. If a *financial honorarium* is available, the committee will direct the contribution to the participating school to use for relevant school based activities (e.g., physical activity research donation may be used for the purchase of Physical Education equipment).
- 18. QUESTIONNAIRES:** Approval will not be granted for questionnaires that require participants to report *any* of the following, unless there is a relevant link to education and parents/guardians have been adequately informed in advance of the specific questions that will be asked:
- Illegal activities;*
  - Life-threatening behavior or state of mental health;*
  - Rating *behaviors of others* (e.g., teachers rating teachers/principals/staff and vice versa or students rating students); or
  - Information about *ethnic or racial background* without a strong and relevant link to the research question.
- 19. STANDARDIZED TESTS:** In the case of certain tests, applicants will have to demonstrate that *qualified personnel* will be administering the test.
- 20. ACCESSIBILITY OF TESTING MATERIALS:** At the request of the school's Principal, the researcher agrees to *adapt* all materials to meet the special needs of the participant. This may include, but is not limited to, the *translation* of material designated to parents/guardians into the appropriate heritage language.
- 21. DEBRIEFING:** All research/evaluation (including online surveys) must conclude with an *ethically approved* debriefing protocol. If any of your questions contain sensitive questions (e.g., mental health), you must provide adequate follow up resources. Please note that school resources cannot be used for the purpose of your debriefing protocol (e.g., staff psychologist/social worker/resource teacher cannot be implicated in your debriefing).

- 22. USE AND STORAGE OF DATA:** Researchers must clearly articulate how the data will be used and stored, particularly for researchers working outside of institutions. Storing data for future use will not be accepted.
- 23. FINAL REPORT:** Researchers must send *an electronic copy* of the final written report to the Chair of the committee upon completion of the project (or a *progress report* for studies seeking extensions). Failure to submit a report will result in the *refusal of future* applications to this committee. The final report should outline the purpose, method and results of the research, and contain a 100 to 200 word abstract. All reports shall respect the anonymity of all participants. Further, the researcher agrees to allow the report to be circulated within the two boards.
- 24. ONE PAGE SUMMARY:** Researchers must send a *one-page summary to the Chair as well as to any participating schools*. The summary should include: *1. purpose; 2. design/methodology; 3. the findings; and 4. implications or relevance to the education system*. Any such reports should contain aggregate data (where appropriate) only; in no circumstance shall a researcher reveal individual data to participants, school staff or parents without express written consent of the participant(s).

## THE APPLICATION PROCESS

Submissions to the Ottawa-Carleton Research and Evaluation Advisory Committee must be sent **electronically** to [Janice.Mullen@ocsb.ca](mailto:Janice.Mullen@ocsb.ca). The **electronic submission** must contain **ALL** pieces of information that are to be included in the package. Please submit your electronic application as **ONE PDF** document and include a **paginated** Table of Contents at the beginning of the document. The committee reserves the right to delay the review of an application if the package is deemed incomplete, if our application forms have not been used, or if the guidelines have not been followed.

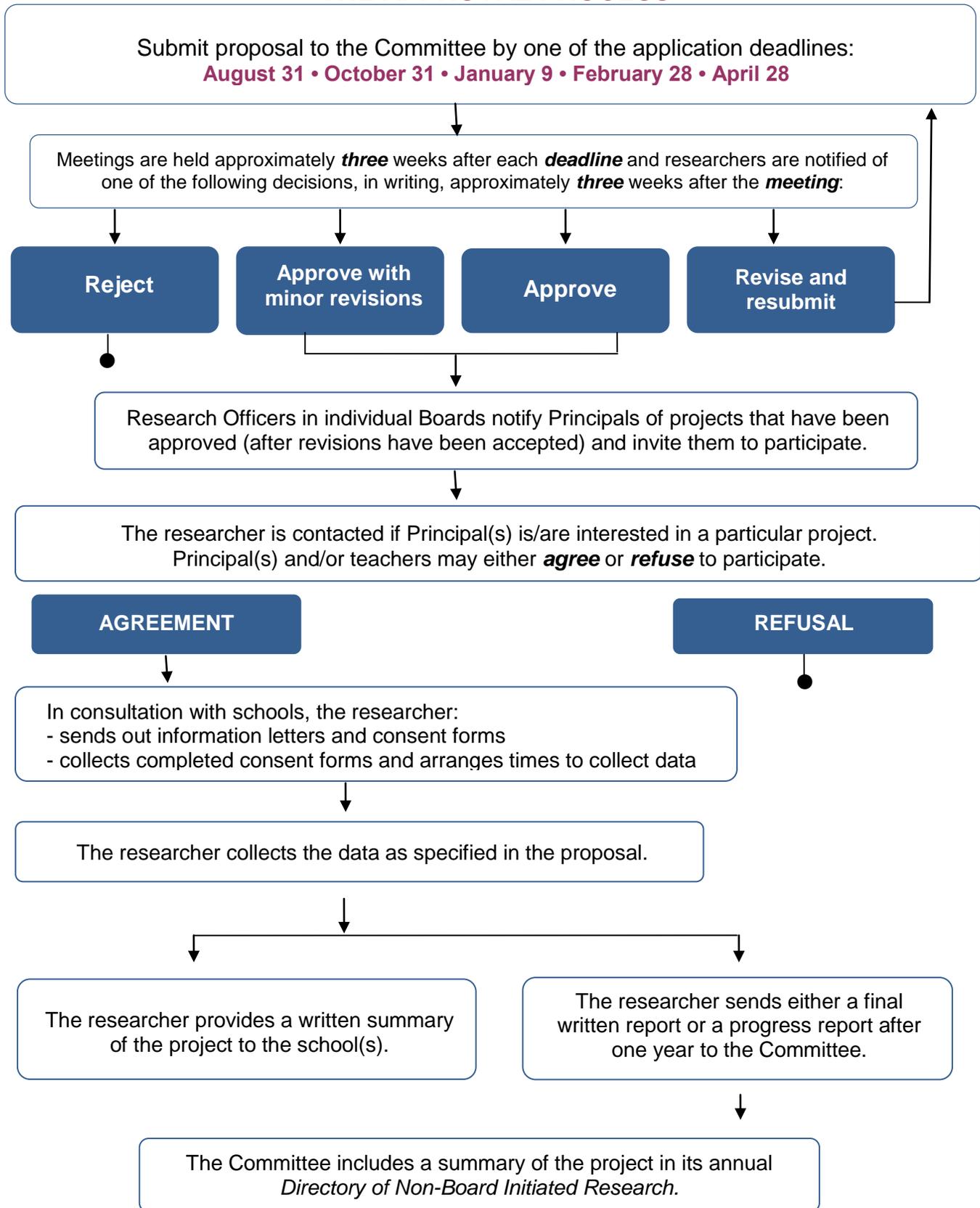
The **Research Application** must be completed using the OCREAC electronic template. To obtain a copy of the OCREAC electronic template please contact [Janice.Mullen@ocsb.ca](mailto:Janice.Mullen@ocsb.ca). For a copy of the Guidelines please go to: <http://www.ocsb.ca/board/admin/committees/ocreac>  
*Alternative application formats will not be accepted.*

- 1. RESEARCH APPLICATION.** A completed **OCREAC Application** form, which in the case of a student, must be countersigned by a professor, preferably the student's thesis.
- 2. ETHICS.** **Approval of the Ethics Committee of the researcher's institution**, if applicable, must be included. Only those proposals reviewed, approved, and are included in the application package will be considered.
- 3. INSTRUMENTS.** Copies of all **tests, questionnaires, and other data collection instruments** which students, staff, and/or parents/guardians will be asked to complete must be submitted in **final form** as drafts will not be considered. Please note that careful attention must be given to ensure that questionnaires and surveys adhere to our guidelines.
- 4. INFORMATION LETTER.** An **information letter** for participants (e.g., parents/guardians, students, teachers, administrators) explaining the purpose of the research and the nature of their participation must be included in the application. (See *draft information letter on page 7*). This letter must indicate that the research has ethical approval from your institution, that active consent is being sought for all mechanisms or formats used for capturing data (e.g., audio recording, picture taking), and that OCREAC and the Principal has approved your application.
- 5. ACTIVE CONSENT.** An **active consent form** for anyone (e.g., students, teachers, administrators) participating in the project must accompany your application and adhere to the OCREAC guidelines. Separate consent forms are required for each participant group and must seek consent for all mechanisms or formats used for capturing data (e.g., audio/video recording, picture taking). *Parental consent is required for all students under the age of 18 (See draft of consent form on page 7.)*
- 6. DEBRIEFING.** Researchers must provide a copy of their **debriefing** document for all participants. In cases where the debriefing will be verbal (e.g., with child participants), a copy of the **transcript** must be included. (See information about debriefing on page 8).
- 7. CURRICULUM VITAE.** Curriculum **vitae** must be included in the application if this is your **first submission** to the Committee.
- 8. POLICE RECORDS CHECK.** An up-to-date copy of the **police records check for service with the vulnerable sector** for all research personnel entering schools must be included.
- 9. LETTERS OF REFERENCE.** Please do not include any letters of support, as they are not considered in the review of the application.

### WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

If your research/evaluation application electronic copy is deemed complete and arrives by the deadline, the application will be added to the OCREAC meeting agenda. Applications deemed incomplete will be returned to the applicant. Committee meetings are typically scheduled within three weeks of each submission deadline. You will be notified by email within 3 weeks of the meeting on one of the following outcomes: reject, approve, approve with minor revisions or revise and resubmit. **Please note that all decisions by the committee are final and we do not accept appeals.** Upon approval, each Board will send out a memo of all approved projects (including a brief description) to Principals inviting them to participate in the various studies. If a Principal agrees to participate, the researcher will be notified and will then be permitted to make the necessary arrangements to conduct their study in the school. *Approval by the Ottawa-Carleton Research and Evaluation Advisory Committee does not obligate any board, department, or school to participate in a study. The decision to participate in a research project is always the prerogative of the school board and participating school Principal and/or teacher.* The stages of the approval process are set out in the chart on the next page.

## THE APPROVAL PROCESS



# DRAFT INFORMATION LETTER AND CONSENT FORM

*Clear, easy-to-read language must be used when preparing information letters and consent forms for parents/guardians and other potential participants (e.g. students, teachers, administrators).*

## **DRAFT INFORMATION LETTER**

Information letters must be printed on institution/agency letterhead and include the following information, as appropriate.

### **All participants:**

- The purpose of the study
- That the project has been approved by the Ottawa-Carleton Research and Evaluation Advisory Committee and the Principal of the school
- That active consent is being sought and that the form does not need to be returned should they decline (unless justified)
- What the participant will be asked to do and the types of questions being asked
- Whether participation is by individual or group
- Whether participation will be during school time or spare time
- The duration of participation (i.e., number of sessions and time required)
- That participation is voluntary and that individuals may withdraw from the study at any time without giving a reason and with no adverse consequences
- How anonymity will be ensured
- How the information collected will be used, stored and disposed of
- That study results will be reported in ways that ensure complete confidentiality
- If you are seeking consent to video/audio tape, indicate the rationale and seek active consent (A separate line for audio/video taped consent; see Draft Consent Form below)
- The researcher's signature, indicating name and telephone number for answering questions about the project
- Contact information for the Research Ethics Board, should participants have ethical questions or concerns

### **Student participants:**

- That scheduling will be at the teacher's convenience to minimize interference with daily routines
- That a teacher will be present at all times
- What will occur for their child during that time should they decline consent
- What information is to be collected from files or records for individual students
- That study results will not appear in any school records

## **DRAFT CONSENT FORM (ACTIVE CONSENT)\***

*Please note that only students with parental consent may participate. It must be clearly articulated that only parents who consent should return the form. Also, permission must be obtained for video/audio-taping or photographic procedures as provided in this example*

*The information collected for this project is confidential and protected under the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, 1989.*

I have read and understood the request for my child to participate in the study of (*give title*). I have discussed it with my child and ...

I give permission for him/her to participate.

I give permission for him/her to be audio/videotaped. **(You must include this if you are audio/videotaping or photographing participants)**

This form is to be completed and returned to the school **ONLY** if I consent to my child participating in this research.

Name of Student: (*please print*) \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Parent/Guardian: (*please print*) \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Parent/Guardian: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Student (if 18 or older): \_\_\_\_\_

*\*This style of this draft may be modified for consent forms for other participants (e.g., teachers, administrators)*

## DEBRIEFING

Similar to free and informed consent, debriefing is an important part of the research process. For deception studies, the debriefing helps the participant to understand the true nature of the study and why they were deceived in the study. For all other studies not involving deception, the debriefing helps to enhance the *educational value* of the study for the participant. In general, the debriefing is an important mechanism in maintaining the participant's trust and support of the research community.

At the end of the participant's involvement in the study, they should be debriefed orally before they leave and should be given a copy of the written debriefing. For young children, an oral debriefing is required and the written debriefing will be sent home to the parent who provided consent. For online surveys, the debriefing should occur prior to exiting the survey. During the debriefing process the participant should also be given an opportunity to ask any questions about the study.

The written debriefing is ideally one page in length and should be written in simple language and using lay terms. Below is a list of points that a debriefing should include:

- A statement thanking participants for their time and participation in the study.
- Details about the study's purpose and hypotheses (i.e., what the study hopes to find), so that participants have an opportunity to learn about the research process as well as the theoretical reasoning behind the study. This description should be brief, and written in simple, easy to understand language (i.e., avoid the use of jargon, statistical terms, or highly specialized terminology).
- An explanation of how the study relates to the general topic of research and to a broader, important area of knowledge.
- A reiteration that their participation has no impact on their school results and the process in which their data will be dealt with.
- In situations where the study used deception, debriefings *must* include a clear explanation of the deception and a clear justification as to why participants were deceived.
- A statement that the study has received ethics approval from the Research Ethics Board of your university or institution (if applicable) and the contact information for the Research Ethics Board (if applicable) should be provided in the event that the participant has any ethical concerns about the study.
- A statement that the study received approval from OCREAC and the school Principal and contact information should they have any questions about the research in the schools.
- The contact information for the lead investigator should be provided in the event that the participant has further questions or concerns about the study.
- If your methodology contains sensitive questions (e.g., mental health), you must provide adequate follow-up resources (e.g., Kids Help Phone).
- Some researchers include one or two references for further reading at the end of their debriefings so that participants who are interested in the research can seek out further information, in order to learn more about the topic of study.

# MEMBERS OF THE OTTAWA-CARLETON RESEARCH AND EVALUATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE 2018-2019

## Ottawa-Carleton District School Board

Katherine Magner, M.A.  
Research Officer, Quality Assurance  
telephone: 613-596-8211, ext. 8588  
email: [katherine.magner@ocdsb.ca](mailto:katherine.magner@ocdsb.ca)

Steven McKibbin  
Evaluation Officer, Learning Support Svcs  
telephone: 613-596-8211, ext. 8658  
email: [steven.mckibbin@ocdsb.ca](mailto:steven.mckibbin@ocdsb.ca)

Joan Oracheski, M.A.  
Manager, Quality Assurance  
telephone: 613-596-8211, ext. 8285  
email: [joan.oracheski@ocdsb.ca](mailto:joan.oracheski@ocdsb.ca)

Alain Brule  
Vice-Principal  
Frederick Banting Sec Alternate Program  
telephone: 613-591-7678  
email: [alain.brule@ocdsb.ca](mailto:alain.brule@ocdsb.ca)

Gosia Ligezinska, Ph.D., C. Psych.  
Psychologist, Learning Support Services  
telephone: 613-596-8211, ext. 8532  
email: [gosia.ligezinska@ocdsb.ca](mailto:gosia.ligezinska@ocdsb.ca)

## Ottawa Catholic School Board

Lauren Figueredo, Ph.D. (CHAIR)  
Research Officer, Student Success Dept.  
telephone: 613-224-4455, ext. 2341  
email: [lauren.figueredo@ocsb.ca](mailto:lauren.figueredo@ocsb.ca)

Donna Mailloux, M.A.  
Research Officer, Student Success Dept.  
telephone: 613-224-4455, ext. 2347  
email: [donna.nailloux@ocsb.ca](mailto:donna.nailloux@ocsb.ca)

Marilyn Kasian, Ph.D.  
Research Officer, Student Success Dept.  
telephone: 613-224-4455, ext. 2347  
email: [marilyn.kasian@ocsb.ca](mailto:marilyn.kasian@ocsb.ca)

Steve McCabe  
Superintendent, Student Success Leading  
& Learning  
telephone: 613-224-4455, ext. 2342  
email: [stephen.mccabe@ocsb.ca](mailto:stephen.mccabe@ocsb.ca)

Richard Chaplinsky  
Principal, St. Bernard  
telephone: 613-521-5894  
email: [richard.chaplinsky@ocsb.ca](mailto:richard.chaplinsky@ocsb.ca)