



GUIDELINES FOR CONDUCTING RESEARCH

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1. Introduction

The Department of Education (**the Department**) aims to provide Queenslanders with high quality education that is informed by the best available evidence.

Underpinning this focus are the Department's responsibilities for protecting school students and staff and maintaining the integrity of learning.

The Department uses a Permission to Approach process to assess whether the wellbeing of students and staff is protected and Research conducted in schools and other Departmental Sites is appropriate, worthwhile and educationally beneficial. Research with students under the care and supervision of the Department is always appraised in a considered and cautious manner.

By appraising all Research at Departmental Sites, the Department is able to determine whether the benefits of the Research to the participants, Departmental Sites and Department clearly outweigh any risks or imposition. The Department is also able to assess the Research against the Standards for Ethical Research Practice.

The Department can also, through its appraisal, monitor Research activities to identify:

- the types of Research being undertaken;
- the level of Research involvement across Departmental Sites;
- any emerging trends in Research with the Department; and
- studies that are likely to benefit its policies and practice.

2. Purpose of the guidelines

The guidelines provide information on the procedures and requirements of the Department with the aim of assisting Researchers in the preparation and completion of Research Applications and the ethical conduct of Research at Departmental Sites. They should be read prior to commencing a Research Application and should be read together with the [Terms and Conditions for Conducting Research](#) and [Standards for Ethical Research Practice](#).

3. Definitions

Appraisal Criteria – A set of criteria used by the Department to assess the Research, and consider its: alignment with the Department’s Research priorities; potential benefit to participants, Departmental Sites or the Department; value to the Research field; level of imposition; quality of methodology; level of risk; and residual risk based on proposed strategies to address risk.

Blue Card – A card issued by Blue Card Services (Department of Justice and Attorney-General) to a person who holds a positive notice under the *Working with Children (Risk Management and Screening) Act 2000* (see Section 220(a)).

Department – Queensland Government Department of Education.

Departmental Sites – Education-related facilities that are the responsibility of the Department. This includes but is not limited to state schools, outdoor and environmental education centres operated by the Department, some early childhood education services operated by the Department, central office, regional offices and websites operated by the Department.

Evidence Framework – The document of this name located at <https://det.qld.gov.au/publications/management-and-frameworks/evidence-framework>. It is a departmental framework that supports generation of better evidence and improves the rigour with which we examine evidence. The framework defines four sources of evidence that serve to strengthen our capacity to use, critique and generate evidence. These sources are: practice and innovation; evaluation; data and analysis; and research.

Exemption Card – A card issued by Blue Card Services (Department of Justice and Attorney-General) to a person who holds a positive exemption notice under the *Working with Children (Risk management and Screening) Act 2000* (see Section 282).

Final Approval – permission granted by the school principal and/or relevant work unit manager to conduct Research in their Departmental Site. Final Approval can only be sought where Permission to Approach has been granted by Research Services or the regional office ([see Section 4.2 as to whichever is appropriate](#)), except where Researchers are only seeking to conduct non-sensitive Research in a single site.

Harm – has the meaning given in the *Child Protection Act 1999* (Qld).

Human Research Ethics Committees (HREC) – Committees, often university-based, tasked with providing ethical oversight of research by reviewing research proposals that include human participants against relevant standards.

National Application Form – An application form to conduct research in schools in more than one Australian state or territory. It is titled ‘National Projects – Application to Conduct Research in Schools’ and is available on the Australian Association for Research in Education (**AARE**) website. The application form is accepted by all State Government education departments and some Catholic dioceses (noting researchers must still submit this form separately to each of the relevant jurisdictions and schooling sectors for approval).

National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research – A statement prepared by the National Health and Medical Research Council (**NHMRC**) that guides the way research with humans is conducted and managed, with emphasis placed on responsibilities and accountabilities of researchers.

Parent/Caregiver – A person with the legal authority to make decisions in relation to the long-term care, welfare and development of the child.

Permission to Approach – The approval sought from the Department (either through Research Services or a regional office) that grants Researchers permission to approach the school principal or work unit manager to request Final Approval to conduct Research.

Personal Information – Information or an opinion (including information or an opinion forming part of a database), whether true or not and whether recorded in material form or not, about an individual whose identity is apparent, or can reasonably be ascertained, from the information or opinion.

Publication – A document intended for public dissemination, in the form of academic papers, theses, reports, conference presentations, webinars or findings that will be made available online, in a library or in the media. Documents intended for Departmental access only, are deemed not to be publications.

Publicity – Includes any media release (including, without limitation, releases to radio, television, print and online media and social), public statement, public statement, public announcement or similar.

Queensland Education Research Inventory (QERI) – An online portal with tools for making an application for conducting Research involving Departmental Sites and/or data, and a searchable inventory of that Research.

Research – Creative and systematic work undertaken in order to increase the stock of knowledge – including knowledge of humankind, culture and society – and to devise new applications of available knowledge. For persons required to submit a Research Application to the Department, this will be the project outlined in Section 2 of the Research Application.

Researcher – A person/s seeking to undertake Research at Departmental Sites, including Research involving Departmental personnel, data and/or records. For persons required to submit a Research Application to the Department, this will be

the representative named in Section 1 of the Research Application who is actively engaged in the Research and readily contactable.

Research Application – The QERI online application form, a previous application form entitled ‘Application for conducting research in Queensland Department of Education and Training’ or the National Application Form and any attachments to these forms.

Research Findings – Content required by the form in QERI for submitting the results of Research and evaluations involving Queensland state schools and other Departmental Sites and/or data. It contains provision for the inclusion of information on: the title of the research; content keywords; the location of the research, research questions, research methodology; a summary of major findings; research limitations; relationship with other research; additional research needed; practical implications; end-users likely to benefit from the research findings; value of the research; list of relevant publications; and researcher’s contact information.

Research Services – a business unit with the Department located in the Department’s central office.

Standards for Ethical Research Practice – The Department’s document of this name currently located at <https://det.qld.gov.au/det-publications/managementandframeworks/evidenceframework/foundationsofevidence/Documents/standards-ethical-research-practice.pdf>. The Standards for Ethical Research Practice are one of the three foundations of the Evidence Framework identifying the Department’s core requirements of ethical practice design, delivery and reporting of Research involving its sites, students or employees. The standards apply to studies undertaken by Departmental staff or external Researchers at Departmental Sites, while recognising that the legislative responsibilities of internal and external researchers can differ.

Terms and Conditions for Conducting Research – The legally binding terms and conditions that all Researchers must agree to when seeking to conduct Research with the Department.

4. Who has to apply to the Department?

A Research Application is required for Research:

- involving Departmental Sites, the recruitment of participants or the use of Departmental, school, staff or student data not already in the public domain; and
- where the intent is that the findings of the Research be disseminated beyond the Department as a Publication (that is, contribute to academic papers, theses, reports, conference presentations, webinars or be made available online, in a library or in the media).

The nature and the scope of proposed Research determines the level of permission required from the Department. Where Research is of a sensitive nature, occurs at

Departmental Sites across multiple education regions, or is requesting non-publically available data from the Department, Research Applications will be assessed through Research Services. Research that does not fall into these categories may undergo assessment through a single site or regional office.

In limited circumstances, where Research will not be conducted at Departmental Sites but a Researcher seeks to notify school staff, students and families of the opportunity to participate in the Research, Researchers may be eligible to complete an abridged application to advertise their Research project in schools rather than complete the full application process. Section 6 provides more detail.

In general, applications to undertake Research in schools for commercial gain, including those that involve primarily marketing activities or market research, will not be considered or granted Permission to Approach by the Department.

4.1 The role of screening questions

The Department has implemented screening questions in order to streamline and clarify the application process. The screening questions can be found in QERI. The purpose of these questions, completed prior to commencing an application form, is to identify whether or not a proposed project falls within the parameters of Research that requires Permission to Approach or Final Approval from the Department.

4.2 Appraisal of applications

Once a Research Application has been submitted, it may be appraised by one of several entities. This is where the Permission to Approach and Final Approval stages become applicable.

If the Research:

- **includes any sensitive items checked in Section 9**, the completed Research Application and supporting documents will be appraised by Research Services in central office for Permission to Approach, prior to the Researcher approaching the site(s) for Final Approval.
- **is to be conducted at Departmental Sites in more than one education region** (see [Region Maps](#) and [School Search](#)), the completed Research Application and supporting documents will be appraised by Research Services in central office for Permission to Approach, prior to the Researcher approaching the site(s) for Final Approval;
- **is to be conducted at more than one Departmental Site in the same education region** (see [Region Maps](#) and [School Search](#)), **and there are no sensitive items** checked in Section 9 of the Research Application, the completed application and supporting documents will go to the Regional Director of the relevant region, to be appraised for Permission to Approach, prior to the Researcher approaching the site(s) for Final Approval;
- **is to be conducted in one Departmental Site only and there are no sensitive items** checked in Section 9 of the Research Application, the

completed application and supporting documentation will go directly to the principal of that school or work unit manager, to be appraised for Final Approval

Where a Research Application considered by Research Services or a Regional Director is granted Permission to Approach, it is the responsibility of the Researcher to seek Final Approval from the relevant school principal(s) and/or manager(s) of the relevant work unit(s).

4.3 Access to departmental data

The Department supports the use of its data for Research purposes, where this is appropriate and ethical. In many instances, use of existing Departmental data may be preferable to collection of new data from schools or other Departmental Sites, as the imposition on the Department is likely to be less.

Researchers wishing to access data held by the Department that is not publically available must apply through a Research Application. These types of applications will be considered by Research Services. Where Permission to Approach is granted, Researchers are responsible for approaching the relevant unit in central office to seek Final Approval. If you are unsure who to approach, please contact Research Services.

5. Queensland Education Research Inventory (QERI)

5.1 What is QERI

QERI is an online portal with tools for making an application for conducting Research involving Queensland state schools and other Departmental Sites and/or data, and a searchable inventory of that Research.

Publication of Research Applications on QERI

The purpose of the QERI application database is to help inform Departmental staff, researchers and the public about approved Research involving Departmental Sites and/or data. The following specific information listed in your Research Application may be published and/or reproduced by the Department in QERI and therefore become publically available:

- Researcher title and name;
- Researcher email address (if Researcher ticks to box on QERI to allow this to occur);
- Name of university/organisation;
- Title of research study (Section 2.1);
- Content keywords (Section 2.2);
- Brief summary of Research (Section 2.3);

- Date of Permission to Approach.

A Researcher may apply to the Department not to make this information public, but this will require justification and will be a consideration in the Department's appraisal for approving the Research Application. The Researcher can apply by emailing **ResearchServices@qed.qld.gov.au**. The exemption is not confirmed until such time the Researcher receives written confirmation of the exemption from Research Services.

Whilst it will usually be the Department's intention to make the above information public, the Department retains the discretion to choose not to make the information public.

5.2 How to fill in the QERI Research Application

To submit a Research Application, first register as a Researcher on the QERI website and then start a new application from the "My Applications" page. This will open a summary of the new application. Each of the 11 sections must be completed before the application can be submitted. Partially complete applications can be saved and returned to at any time.

5.3 Appraisal process

Research Applications submitted through QERI are assessed against alignment with the Department's Standards for Ethical Research Practice, Appraisal Criteria, and these Guidelines for Conducting Research. During the appraisal, Researchers may receive emails from the Department asking them to log in to QERI to view and respond to requests for additional information or amendments. The standard processing time for Research Applications received by Research Services is up to 12 weeks. Depending on the nature of the proposed Research, the Department may also require the Researcher to provide a letter from the Researcher's employer or institution, demonstrating that entity's awareness and approval of the proposed Research.

5.4 Terms and Conditions for conducting Research

Researchers who complete and submit a Research Application through QERI will be required to agree to, and will be bound by, the Department's Terms and Conditions for Conducting Research. Without limiting the Department's rights, failure to comply with these may preclude Researchers from being granted Permission to Approach, Final Approval or permission to advertise in schools, for any or all future Research in Queensland Departmental Sites.

The Department retains the discretion to reject Research Applications for any reason. For particular research, the Department may also impose additional conditions and requirements beyond those outlined in the Guidelines and Terms and Conditions for Conducting Research. These will be negotiated with the Researcher as part of the Permission to Approach or Final Approval process.

The Department does not ordinarily publically disclose the identity of Departmental Sites involved in Research however may need to in exceptional circumstances. However, the translation of Research findings can be facilitated through the disclosure of Research site details by mutual agreement of principal/manager(s) at participating Departmental Sites and other Departmental employees. Requests to initiate this process are to be made to Research Services.

Publication of Research Findings on QERI

If the Researcher provides consent, Research Findings may also be published by the Department on QERI and therefore available to the public.

Whilst it will usually be the Department's intention to publish the Research Findings, the Department retains the discretion not to publish.

6. Advertising in Schools

6.1 Scope

The option to complete the [Research Advertisement in Schools](#) application is only available where the prospective Researcher is seeking to advertise their study on school noticeboards or in newsletters in order to recruit voluntary participants for Research that is not to be conducted in state schools. Recruitment of participants that requires school involvement beyond this, such as sending emails or speaking in a school assembly, will require a completed Research Application.

Researchers who have this Research (or substantively similar Research) rejected as a Research Application at the Permission to Approach stage, may not apply for permission to advertise this Research in schools, unless advised otherwise by the Department.

If you are unsure whether or not you are eligible to submit a Research Advertisement in Schools application form, please contact Research Services.

6.2 The school's role

Researchers may apply for permission to advertise in schools directly through each school principal using the Departmental Research Advertisement in Schools application form. The school principal's role is to consider whether the advertisement is suitable to be included in the school newsletter considering the principles outlined in the Department's Advertising Procedure [see: <http://ppr.det.qld.gov.au/corp/commmark/Pages/Advertising.aspx>] around what would constitute acceptable and unacceptable advertising. Permission to advertise in schools is not an endorsement of the Research by the school Principal.

6.3 The application

Applicants are required to provide:

- Project title;
- Contact details;
- Proposed advertising method (e.g. newsletter or noticeboard);
- Text of the proposed advertisement;
- Proof of HREC ethics approval or equivalent;
- Proof of Blue Card (where applicable); and
- Summary of Research (maximum 150 words).

6.4 Terms and Conditions for Conducting Research

Researchers who complete a Research Advertisement in Schools application are expected to behave in a manner that is consistent with the department's Terms and Conditions for Conducting Research.

7. Permission to Approach

7.1 What is Permission to Approach

Permission to Approach grants Researchers permission to approach principals and/or work unit managers to invite their participation in proposed Research. This is the first step in what is normally a two-phase permission process.

Where Permission to Approach is required, applications will be appraised either by Research Services or one of the regional offices (as appropriate). This process allows the suitability of Research to be considered before school principals and/or managers are able to make the final decision as to whether their school, office or site will participate in the Research. Once Permission to Approach is granted, Researchers may actively seek Final Approval from the relevant principals and/or managers.

7.2 Who has to apply

Prospective Researchers are required to register and submit a Research Application, irrespective of whether Permission to Approach or Final Approval is sought at the outset.

Researchers seeking to conduct their study in more than one Australian state or territory can use the National Application Form, but will also be required to register details about their Research in QERI. Questions about this process can be directed to Research Services.

Applications to QERI are processed to determine whether they must first gain Permission to Approach or can progress straight to Final Approval stage. Please see Section 4.2 for the conditions determining this process.

7.3 Why it is necessary

The purpose of the Permission to Approach process is to assess the proposed Research against Departmental policies regarding Research, alignment with the Department's Research priorities and Research plan, and to assess whether the Research might place an undue imposition on participants.

This process also allows the Department to appraise proposed Research (including the Research design and methodology, information statements and consent forms, and Research instruments) for suitability for use at Departmental Sites or using Departmental data.

Permission to Approach does not constitute ethics approval, support for the Research, endorsement of the Research or approval of the methodology, information statements or consent forms. Neither does it constitute support for the general or commercial use of an intervention, program or other enterprise that may be evaluated as part of the Research.

8. Final Approval

8.1 What is Final Approval

Final Approval is granted by the school principal and/or the relevant work unit manager in the Department and permits Researchers to conduct research in the Departmental Site or use departmental data that is overseen by the principal/manager. Final Approval can only be sought where Permission to Approach has been granted, except where Researchers are seeking to conduct Research of a non-sensitive nature, in a single school or site. Final Approval does not constitute ethics clearance, support for the Research or endorsement of the Research by the principal, school or the Department. Neither does it constitute support for the general or commercial use of an intervention, program or other enterprise that may be evaluated as part of the Research.

8.2 Who has to apply

Every Researcher seeking to conduct Research at Departmental Sites or use non-publically available Departmental data will need Final Approval. In most instances, Final Approval will be sought by providing the relevant principal/work unit manager with a copy of sufficient documentation for them to appraise the Research.

This documentation should include but is not limited to:

- a copy of the Permission to Approach letter from Research Services or a regional office (if applicable);
- a gatekeeper information statement that describes the Research, identifies who will be involved (e.g. students, teachers, Parents/Caregivers) and explains what will be required of the participants;

- a gatekeeper consent form for the principal/manager to sign to indicate their agreement that staff, students and/or Parents/Caregivers can be invited to participate in the Research;
- a copy of the final ethical clearance from their institution's HREC or, where appropriate, a statement outlining the ethical approach to the proposed Research;
- full copies of any data collection instruments such as surveys, questionnaires and interview schedules to be used in the study; and
- a copy of all current Blue Cards and/or exemption notices from Blue Card Services (where applicable).

Where a Researcher is seeking to conduct Research in a single site and their Research design does not include any of the sensitivities outlined in Section 9 of the Research Application in QERI, the application will be progressed directly to the relevant principal or manager for Final Approval.

8.3 Where Final Approval is granted

Final Approval, obtained when the principal or manager has signed the informed consent form, grants Researchers permission to begin their Research. Upon receiving Final Approval, Researchers are permitted to approach students, staff and Parents/Caregivers (as relevant) to seek their participation in the Research project or to request data from the Department. Individuals' decisions to participate in Research must be at all times voluntary and consent to participate must be sought before Research begins. Consent can be withdrawn at any time. Further information on consent requirements is provided below. Final Approval does not constitute ethics clearance, support for the Research or endorsement of the Research by the principal, school or the Department. Neither does it constitute support for the general or commercial use of an intervention, program or other enterprise that may be evaluated as part of the Research.

9. Ethical research design

The Department requires Research to be ethically designed and ethically conducted. Proposed Research must be able to demonstrate that it complies with the:

- [Standards for Ethical Research Practice](#);
- NHMRC [National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research](#);
- [Terms and Conditions for Conducting Research](#).

Researchers are encouraged to familiarise themselves with these documents before submitting any Research Application to the Department.

The following section outlines the Department's policies on key aspects of ethical Research practice in the design, delivery and reporting of Research.

9.1 Appropriate administration in schools

In applying to conduct Research on school sites, Researchers are required to demonstrate why it is necessary for the Research to occur on a school site, and involve the participation of students and/or staff. Applications are assessed against the Appraisal Criteria to determine whether the potential benefits of the Research outweigh the level of imposition or administrative burden and any risk(s) associated with Research participation.

Careful consideration is given by the Department to any Research that involves students and/or creates a disruption to school activities. While poorly-designed Research projects are rejected by the Department as a rule, the Department may also decline to participate in well-designed Research due to, for example, the potential imposition on schools or other Departmental Sites, the ability to source Research participants outside Departmental Sites, or where such Research is similar to existing studies. Similarly, while Permission to Approach for Researchers to approach schools may be given by the appropriate area of the Department, all Research remains voluntary and Final Approval resides with the school principal or work unit manager, who is best placed to determine the feasibility for their school or site to participate in the Research.

9.2 Sensitivities

Within Section 9 of the Research Application there is a series of Research topics and design features that the Department deems as sensitive. The presence of one or more sensitivities does not preclude Permission to Approach or Final Approval being granted. However, Research including sensitivities will undergo a more rigorous appraisal process. Researchers should be aware that the appraisal process for Research that contains sensitivities will likely take longer to complete than non-sensitive Research. In their Research Application, the Researcher is requested to provide a description of their approach to mitigate any risks associated with the sensitivity. A detailed approach to risk management will facilitate the Department's appraisal process.

9.3 Ethics committee clearance

The Department requires a copy of the final clearance letter from the relevant institution HREC, where applicable. Researchers without access to a HREC will require a detailed ethical statement that demonstrates how their Research is aligned with the NHMRC's National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research.

Applications to a HREC (or similar) can be submitted at the same time as a Research Application to the Department. However, while the Department will start its consideration of the Research Application at the same time as the HREC is making its own assessment, no Research Application will be granted Permission to Approach and/or Final Approval until a copy of the final ethics committee approval

letter, all ethics committee communications regarding the project, and final approved versions of information statements and consent forms have been received.

Researchers should note that the Department, in undertaking its appraisal, may make further requests or require amendments to consent forms, information statements or the Research protocol. It is up to the Researcher to update their HREC accordingly. Similarly, should the HREC request amendments at any time (including after the Research has been approved and commenced) the Departmental approving authority will require written notification of these changes for its consideration and records.

9.4 Information statements and consent forms

All Research participants/ their Parents/Caregivers (if applicable) must be provided with an information statement that describes key aspects of the Research and lists contact details. Information statements provide context to the consent forms that participants/ their Parents/Caregivers (if applicable) are required to sign and contain information that might reasonably be expected to influence their willingness to participate.

Information statements need to summarise the purpose of the Research project, expected participant involvement, the risks involved, how confidentiality will be protected, how the Research will be used, whether data is to be housed overseas and/or be made available for future Research, the nature of participant/ Parental/Caregiver (if applicable) consent, ethics clearance, where to ask questions about the Research and lodge complaints, and what the participant/ their Parent/Caregiver (if applicable) has to do after reading the information statement.

Where Research involves multiple categories of participants (e.g. teachers and students), each participant group must be provided with a tailored information statement and consent form. These forms should use language, document titles and format appropriate for the age/category of participant and address the specific role and obligations of that group in the Research.

Principals require dedicated gatekeeper information sheets and consent forms. Even if principals are not participants in the proposed Research, they have responsibility and final say over the activities that occur at their school and involve students and their teaching staff.

Researchers intending to use video, photographic or audio recording to collect data should state this in the information statement and on the consent form detailing how such information will be used and how participant anonymity will be preserved. The researcher should also detail the approach to be used for any non-consenting individuals, to ensure they are not captured in any recordings without consent.

In cases where visual images of children are required for the purposes of the Research, this must be stated in the information statement and explicit approval from

their Parent/Caregiver must be sought on the consent form. Parents/Caregivers may consent to children participating in the Research but not being photographed or filmed, and Researchers must accommodate this preference.

If visual images are intended for use by the Researchers beyond data analysis (e.g. for dissemination in reports or presentations), the Research participants/ their Parents/Caregivers (if applicable) must be fully informed and asked to consent using a separate 'release' form.

Researchers intending to secure work samples from children for data collection purposes must obtain Parental/Caregiver's consent, and include this in the consent form and information statement. The consent of the participating child should also be obtained. Intellectual property from student work samples remains with the child. Explicit consent must be obtained to reproduce or publish student work in Research reports and other publications.

Please refer to QERI for the Information Sheet and Consent Form templates. These provide a more detailed description of the content required for the composition of the documents.

Note: While the above information provides for consent from a "participant /their Parent/Caregiver", please see section 9.5 below for guidance on obtaining consent in respect of children living independently of their Parents/Caregivers and in respect of adults who are unable to give informed consent).

9.5 Consent for participation in Research

Consent to participate in Research must be voluntary and based on sufficient information and an adequate understanding of both the proposed Research and the implications of participating.

In accordance with the NHMRC's National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research, it is essential that appropriate information and consent procedures are followed in any Research involving the Department.

Before a Research participant can participate in a Research project, written specific, informed, current and voluntary consent must be obtained from -

- if the Research participant is an adult (over the age of 18 years) - the Research participant, provided the Research participant has the capacity to give informed consent (i.e. is Gillick competent);
- if the Research participant is an adult and unable to give informed consent (i.e. lacks capacity) – a person or body with legal authority to make decisions for the Research participant;

- if the Research participant is a child (under the age of 18 years) - a Parent/Caregiver of the Research participant, unless it would be inappropriate in the circumstances to require the written consent of a Parent/Caregiver (for example, it may be inappropriate to obtain the consent of a parent if the Research participant is living independently of his or her Parent(s)/Caregiver(s))

(note, informed written consent from a Parent/Caregiver must also indicate that the Parent/Caregiver has discussed the matter with their child, who in turn has explicitly agreed to participate. Agreement by the child to participate is documented by the child co-signing the consent form provided to the Parent/Caregiver);

- if the Research participant is a child and it is inappropriate in the circumstances to require the written consent of a Parent/Caregiver (see above) - the Research participant, provided the Research participant has the capacity to give informed consent (i.e. is Gillick competent).

Where consent is required from a Parent/Caregiver, the Researcher must ensure that it obtains consent from a person who meets the definition of Parent/Caregiver, namely a person with the legal authority to make decisions in relation to the long term care, welfare and development of the child.

As outlined in the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research, Research participants and Parents/Caregivers (if applicable) have the right to be fully informed regarding the intent, nature and scope of the Research when deciding if they or their child will participate.

Permission to contact participants to invite their voluntary participation must be obtained from the school principal and/or manager and retained by the Researcher.

All participants, including children, and their Parents/Caregivers need to be informed that:

- their participation in the Research project is voluntary;
- a decision not to participate will not adversely affect their right to participate in regular activities (e.g. school curricula, work professional development), their academic achievement, or their relationship with their teachers, schools, the Department, and the research institution;
- they are free to withdraw from the Research at any time and have information regarding who to contact if they wish to withdraw from the study; and
- they may seek further information about the Research, including a contact person and details for accessing further information regarding the project.

9.6 Passive or opt-out processes

The Department **does not** allow research that uses passive or opt out consent/processes.

9.7 Confidentiality, anonymity and privacy

The [Information Privacy Act 2009 \(Qld\)](#) (IP Act) regulates collection, storage, use and disclosure of Personal Information. Researchers operating at Departmental Sites, or using existing Departmental data, are required to comply with the requirements of the IP Act (as if they were the Department), and any other legislation applicable to them, to ensure that participants' privacy and the confidentiality of records and other confidential data is maintained. The Terms and Conditions also contain privacy obligations, and Researchers must at all times comply with the highest standard applicable. Personal information includes information that enables an individual to be identified, e.g. their name, age, or other defining characteristics. Consideration must also be given to information that may identify a person, locality or school by inference.

9.8 Disclosure of personal information by the Department for Research purposes

Personal Information held by the Department can be disclosed by the Department for Research purposes with the consent of the person to whom the information relates, or if the person is a child unable to consent, with the consent of a Parent/Caregiver of the child. For the Department to disclose a student's personal information, Parental/Caregiver consent can only be given by a person who meets the definition of "parent" in Section 10 of the *Education (General Provisions) Act 2006* (Qld).

In only very limited circumstances, personal information that is held by the Department can be disclosed for Research purposes without consent. Under Section 426(4)(e)(iii) of the [Education \(General Provisions\) Act 2006 \(Qld\)](#) (for students' personal information) and Information Privacy Principle 11(1)(f) of the *Information Privacy Act 2009* (Qld) (for all other personal information), the chief executive (or their delegate) may give written consent for the disclosure of personal information if he or she is reasonably satisfied the disclosure is necessary for research if it satisfies all of the following conditions:

- A. the Research is in the public interest; and
- B. the disclosure does not involve the publication of all or any of the information in a form that identifies a person to whom the information relates; and
- C. it is not practicable to obtain the express or implied agreement of each person to whom the information relates before the information is disclosed; and
- D. the chief executive (or delegate) is reasonably satisfied the person to whom the information is disclosed will not disclose the information to anyone else.

9.9 Inducements, incentives and reimbursements

The Department does not approve the use of inducements to participate as they are viewed as coercion under the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research.

Any payment offered to Research participants that is likely to encourage participants to take risks that could cause harm, discomfort or inconvenience, is ethically unacceptable and not supported by the Department.

Where there is an administrative cost associated with Research participation, a reimbursement of this can be offered to the Departmental Site, e.g. teacher relief.

9.9.1 Incentives for students and/or non-staff participants

While the Department prefers Researchers to employ other strategies, in partnership with the Departmental Site(s), that will increase response rates, use of a small incentive is acceptable in some circumstances, to maximise the number of participants and produce better quality research.

Incentives will only be considered under the following circumstances:

- the Research topic and methods are low risk;
- the Research outcomes provide significant potential benefit to participants and/or Departmental Sites;
- the incentive is not likely to create a research market that disadvantages studies without a comparable incentive;
- the incentive is not cash or readily converted to cash and has an educational value or is arranged with the school, e.g. for credit in the tuckshop or a bookshop;
- the Research itself is about the use of incentives in education.

9.9.2 Incentives for Departmental staff

Any incentive offered to Departmental staff for research participation during the course of their duties must comply with the [Public Service Commission Directive 22/09 Gifts and Benefits](#). The Directive indicates that 'public service employees must not ask for or encourage the giving of any form of gift or benefit in connection with the performance of official duties. This includes entering any discretionary competitions which involve a prize.'

9.10 Intellectual property

The management of intellectual property in the Department is guided by the Queensland Public Sector Intellectual Property Principles (V2).

Data owned by the Department may be a form of intellectual property. By approving the use of departmental information for Research purposes, the Department does not transfer any rights of ownership of the data, but grants the Researcher a licence to use the data only for the specified purpose and period of the Research.

Contractors and consultants engaged by the Department must comply with any contract that they have entered into with the Department and any laws applicable to them. In this situation, the Terms and Conditions for Conducting Research set out the relevant requirements.

Intellectual property created by collaborative Research between independent Researchers and Departmental employees, such as Australian Research Council Linkage projects, should be addressed in contractual arrangements between the parties.

In accordance with the provisions of the [Copyright Act 1968 \(Cth\)](#), the State of Queensland owns copyright resulting from works produced by the Department's employees in the course of their employment duties.

Please note that the Department does not own any intellectual property in works authored by students or Parents/Caregivers.

It is prudent for Researchers to obtain professional legal advice about intellectual property, contracts and other legal issues.

9.11 Moral rights

Authors retain moral rights of attribution of authorship, rights against false attribution of authorship and the right of integrity of authorship. The Department duly refers to authors when citing Research reports, in accordance with the [Queensland Public Sector Intellectual Property Guidelines](#).

9.12 Data management

Researchers must adopt procedures to ensure the integrity and confidentiality of data during processing and storage. Researchers must ensure the secure storage of data, including password locking of electronic files, and hard copies to be locked in filing cabinets.

Unless otherwise approved by the Department or required by law, all identifying information must be deleted and data management procedures employed to ensure anonymity of participants and Department Sites (including schools). Researchers must provide details of the data management procedures they will use to ensure this protection in their Research Application, e.g. strategies for information storage, access and disposal of data.

Provided consent has been given by the participants/ their Parents/Caregivers (if applicable), video, photographic or audio recordings are to be used only for the

purposes of the Research and should be securely stored. Unless otherwise approved by the Department, all visual images are to be de-identified. Such records must be destroyed at the conclusion of the Research unless retention is required by law, or express permission has been obtained by the participants, their parents (for children) and the Department.

Public use of video, photographic or audio images requires a separate release form to be signed by the participants/ their Parents/Caregiver (if applicable) and principal (if applicable, where the school can be reasonably identified).

For any data that is transferred and/or stored overseas, the Researcher must obtain the written consent of the participants/ their Parents/Caregivers (if applicable) in the consent form for this to occur. Similarly, for data that is intended to be made available for future Research use, the Researcher should clearly explain the parameters of access and possible use of the data to participants / their Parents/Caregivers (if applicable) to enable them to make an informed decision.

While the Department provides the above information to assist the Researcher, the Researcher remains solely responsible for ensuring data is collected, stored and disposed of in compliance with all relevant laws and ethical standards.

Note: While the above information provides for consent from a “participant /their Parent/Caregiver”, please see section 9.5 below for guidance on obtaining consent in respect of children living independently of their Parents/Caregivers and in respect of adults who are unable to given informed consent).

9.13 Blue Cards

The [Working with Children \(Risk Management and Screening\) Act 2000 \(Qld\)](#) requires particular categories of persons working with children to undergo the Working with Children Check or Blue Card Check. All Researchers wishing to work with children and young people (aged less than 18 years of age) at Departmental Sites will more than likely be required to hold a Blue Card.

At the time of applying for Permission to Approach, Researchers must supply evidence that they have a Blue Card or Exemption Card that covers the Research they are conducting, or are in the process of obtaining the appropriate card. If you believe you are exempt from requiring a Blue Card, then you must apply for an Exemption Card or provide the Department with written verification from [Blue Card Services](#) that you do not require a Blue Card or an Exemption Card.

It is the applicant’s responsibility to contact Blue Card Services to confirm whether a Blue Card will be necessary in their specific circumstances. Researchers must

advise the Department immediately of any change in the nature of any Blue Card, Exemption Card or relevant exemption conditions during the period of Research.

Blue Cards must be in place before Research starts.

9.14 Child safety and duty of care

The Department must be satisfied that Research involving the participation of students is not contrary to their best interests. Any Research that involves students must provide for their emotional, psychological, and physical security and wellbeing at all times.

The Department does not allow the lone interaction of Researchers with individual students. Where Research requires interviews with students, a group interview should be conducted in the presence of a teacher or other school staff member. If a group interview is not possible, the interview should be conducted in the presence of a teacher or other school staff member or in an open space in view of the school staff.

Doctors, registered nurses, teachers, police officers, child advocates and early childhood education and care providers have mandatory reporting obligations under the [Child Protection Act 1999 \(Qld\)](#) and associated regulation. Staff members of State schools also have mandatory reporting obligations under the *Education (General Provisions) Act 2006*. In addition to mandatory reporting obligations, all employees of, and visitors to, state schools are required to abide by the terms of the Department's [Student Protection Guidelines](#) and discuss all suspicions of Harm or risk of Harm to a student with the school principal. If suspicions relate to the principal, conferral should occur with the Regional Director.

Therefore, it is expected that Researchers operating at Departmental Sites with children, or conducting Research with children that were recruited through a Departmental Site, will have processes in place to ensure appropriate and immediate reporting to school principals, and (in consultation with the school principal) to other relevant agencies, when they reasonably suspect a child has been Harmed or is at risk of Harm.

Researchers must also immediately report to the school principal any incident or occurrence where it is identified that a student may benefit from follow up support. This may be as a result of a students' direct participation in the Research, or from information disclosed that may not constitute Harm or risk of Harm, but does indicate the student may benefit from additional support.

Where Research includes survey questions on the clinical mental health status or safety of a student, the Department requires that the survey not be administered in a non-identifiable, anonymous format. It is the Department's expectation that

Researchers review all student surveys that meet this criterion and notify the school of any student surveys that show a concerning response to mental health or child safety-related questions. The informed consent process to students and their Parents/Caregivers should clearly identify this requirement.

Researchers seeking to undertake Research with children also have additional ethical responsibilities. The international [Ethical Research Involving Children](#) (ERIC) project's Ethical guidance: harms and benefits (external site) sets out the following questions for Researchers to consider when proposing Research involving children:

- Does this Research need to be done?
- Do you have the resources necessary to do the Research?
- How well prepared are you, the Researcher, to meet with children?
- How will you ensure children are safe?
- How will you respond to children if they become distressed or upset?

In line with the ERIC guidance, and in order to minimise risk of Harm to children, the Department will need to be provided with adequate information in the Research application to gauge the competency of the Researchers in working with children, specifically the:

- expertise and skills of Researchers/team members (their training, qualifications and experience to indicate knowledge, principles and skills in Research with children; their integrity and sensitivity to issues of Research with children; the protocols and processes in place to mitigate risks, identify issues and handle any adverse impacts);
- level of supervision and support provided to the Researcher(s) by their supervisor and/or experts in the field; and
- processes in place for sufficient follow-up support for children if required, in consultation with the school/site personnel.

When children from disadvantaged/vulnerable groups are included in, or the focus of, Research, there may need to be additional safeguards. For example, any Research to be conducted with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participants must also demonstrate compliance with the [NHMRC Values and Ethics: Guidelines for Ethical Conduct in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Research](#).

9.15 Disclosure of criminal activity

Under the Terms and Conditions for Conducting Research, Researchers' disclosure obligations extend to reporting criminal activity. If a Researcher is aware of a Research participant engaging, or intending to engage in, criminal activity (e.g. theft, use of weapons) they must disclose this to the school principal or other appropriate

authority. This must be made clear to Research participants through the information sheet/consent forms.

9.16 Amendments to an application

Written approval from the initial approving authority (Research Services, Regional Director or Departmental Site) must be sought for any changes to a Research project. These include any changes to the Research team, location of the Research, level of sensitivity or imposition associated with the Research, as well as changes that alter the initial information provided to participants or Parents/Caregivers or provide new information that can reasonably be considered to influence participants' willingness to continue with the study. Once approved, this variation must be provided in writing to participants and Parents/Caregivers.

Significant amendments will require the submission of a new Research Application.

The changes must not be implemented until all permissions and consents required in relation to the amendment have been obtained.

9.17 Department endorsement

Researchers must not assert to have Departmental endorsement at any stage of their Research implementation or in the publication of Research findings. Permission to Approach Departmental Sites to conduct Research or to advertise in schools does not constitute endorsement of any Research by the Department.

9.18 Department logo

Researchers are not permitted to use the Department's logo on documents related to their Research. This includes on consent forms, information statements, final reports and webinars. Where Research has been commissioned by the Department, Researchers must liaise with their Departmental contacts on the use of logos.

9.19 Reporting to the Department

The Department is interested in accessing findings of Research permitted by the Department, and in collaboration with Researchers, publishing these findings in a format that is accessible to the end users of the Research. It is therefore a requirement that all Researchers provide a summary of the findings of the Research to participants and participating Departmental Sites, unless it would be inappropriate in the circumstances to provide the summary to the participant (for example, it may be inappropriate to provide a summary to a child participant who does not have sufficient maturity/ capacity to understand the summary).

The Department has a standard template for Research findings in QERI and the Department may publish the Research Findings where the Researcher has consented. This template should be completed by all Researchers permitted to undertake their Research, once their Research is complete. The template encourages the Researcher to present their findings:

- in a clear and concise manner and in non-technical language;
- in a way that is sensitive and respectful of cultural, religious and other differences amongst Research participants, and mindful of the impact that publication could have on participants;
- using a format, language and concepts that are accessible to the end-users of the Research, including, where relevant, practitioners;
- using specific examples that identify the practical implications of the Research for policy and/or practice;
- using honest interpretations of the Research that note any limitations and avoid unwarranted generalisations; and
- in a way that permits scrutiny and contributes to public knowledge and understanding.

The Department also requires a draft copy of any Publication resulting from the Research. The Department may request amendments or alterations be made prior to publication and in some cases require that a Publication is not published, advertised or made publically available in any way. A request not to publish will not be made unreasonably. See clause 7 of the Terms and Conditions for Conducting Research for further details.

9.20 Publicity

The use of the media to promote awareness of the high quality evidence being generated by Researchers – particularly Research that is engaging students, improving outcomes and supporting teachers in their practice – is supported by the Department. The Department prefers a collaborative approach to releasing Research to the media, so as to increase the accuracy of media reports and ensure that the Department is best placed to respond to approaches by the media to comment on Research findings and their implications.

Clause 10 of the Terms and Conditions for Conducting Research outlines the Department's requirements in relation to media activity and other forms of Publicity

The Department is to be granted sufficient time to review the content of the proposed Publicity, and may choose to edit this content and provide additional content that relates to the Research findings, for example, on how the Department is using the findings to inform the delivery of education services. In some cases the Department may require that particular types of Publicity are not published, advertised or made publically available in any way. A request not to release will not be made unreasonably.

10. Governing legislation, regulations and guidelines

Research conducted at Departmental Sites using departmental data must comply with relevant State and Commonwealth legislation, regulations and guidelines, including but not limited to the:

- *Anti-Discrimination Act 1991* (Qld)
<https://www.legislation.qld.gov.au/LEGISLTN/CURRENT/A/AntiDiscrimA91.pdf>
- *Child Protection Act 1999* (Qld)
<https://www.legislation.qld.gov.au/LEGISLTN/CURRENT/C/ChildProtectA99.pdf>
- *Copyright Act 1968* (Cth)
<https://www.legislation.gov.au/Details/C2015C00372>
- *Education (General Provisions) Act 2006* (Qld)
<https://www.legislation.qld.gov.au/LEGISLTN/CURRENT/E/EducGenPrA06.pdf>
- *Education (General Provisions) Regulation 2006* (Qld)
<https://www.legislation.qld.gov.au/LEGISLTN/CURRENT/E/EducGenPrR06.pdf>
- Ethical Research Involving Children
<http://childethics.com/>
- *Information Privacy Act 2009* (Qld)
<https://www.legislation.qld.gov.au/LEGISLTN/ACTS/2009/09AC014.pdf>
- National Statement for Ethical Conduct in Human Research (2007)
<https://www.nhmrc.gov.au/guidelines-publications/e72>
- Values and Ethics - Guidelines for Ethical Conduct in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Research
<https://www.nhmrc.gov.au/guidelines-publications/e52>
- Public Service Commission Directive 22/09 Gifts and Benefits
<https://www.forgov.qld.gov.au/system/files/documents/2009-22-gifts-benefits.pdf?v=1450072895>
- Queensland Public Sector Intellectual Property Guidelines
<https://www.qld.gov.au/dsiti/assets/documents/ip-principles.pdf>
- *Racial Discrimination Act 1975* (Cth)
<https://www.legislation.gov.au/Details/C2016C00089>

- *Right to Information Act 2009* (Qld)
<https://www.legislation.qld.gov.au/LEGISLTN/CURRENT/R/RightInfoA09.pdf>
- *Right to Information Regulation 2009* (Qld)
<https://www.legislation.qld.gov.au/LEGISLTN/CURRENT/R/RightInfoR09.pdf>
- *Standards for Ethical Research Practice*
<https://qed.qld.gov.au/publications/management-and-frameworks/evidence-framework/foundations-evidence/ethical-research-practice>
- *Student Protection Guidelines*
<https://oneportal.deta.qld.gov.au/Students/studentprotection/Pages/Studentprotectionprocedureandguidelines.aspx>
- *Terms and Conditions for Conducting Research*
http://education.qld.gov.au/corporate/research/terms_conditions.pdf
- *Working with Children (Risk Management and Screening) Act 2000* (Qld)
<https://www.legislation.qld.gov.au/LEGISLTN/CURRENT/W/WorkwithChildrenRMSA00.pdf>