

NLSchools refers to all public K-12 English schools and school-related facilities under the jurisdiction of the Department of Education, Education Operations Branch and all employees working therein providing services and supports to such schools, including those who work in the areas of school facilities, student transportation, program implementation, student services, and procurement.

Policy Name

Research Studies and Surveys

Policy Statement

The Department of Education is committed to building local knowledge of teaching and learning by supporting and facilitating education-related research studies throughout schools and school-related facilities within NLSchools.

Background

The department recognizes the importance of using research to inform teaching and learning and educational practices, as well as the many benefits of research to student achievement. Therefore, the department will support and encourage research within NLSchools and will endeavour to facilitate education-related research requests.

Scope

This policy applies to all individuals and groups, both internal and external to NLSchools, who wish to engage employees/students in a research study or activity. All such research initiatives will be governed by the contents of this policy. This policy does not apply to Government of Canada or Government of Newfoundland and Labrador mandated or supported research projects or surveys.

Policy Directives

1. To be eligible to conduct research within NLSchools, the researcher is required to be:
 - working at the graduate or post-graduate level of studies, or an equivalent level approved by the Superintendent of Schools or designate; or
 - conducting research for an accredited agency where the research is deemed, by the Superintendent of Schools or designate, to have the potential to benefit teaching and student learning.

2. All approved research will adhere to other NLSchools policies and procedures
3. Requests for permission to conduct research must be submitted in writing, on an application form developed by NLSchools, to the Superintendent of Schools or designate.
4. Notwithstanding department approval, school participation in a research study that is not required by law, or mandated by the department, is at the discretion of the school administrator.
5. All participants involved in a research study or survey must be made aware that their participation is wholly voluntary.
6. When a request to conduct research has been approved by NLSchools and at the school level, the researcher must ensure this policy is strictly followed.
7. All research requests must meet the [Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans](#)
8. The researcher is fully responsible for organizing and conducting the research project. NLSchools takes no responsibility in conducting the research, and will not be held liable for any negative impacts relating to a research effort.

Administrative Procedures

1 Procedures for Research Approval

- 1.1 Requests for permission to conduct research must be submitted in writing, on an application form developed by NLSchools, to the Superintendent of Schools.
- 1.2 The following information must accompany all applications:
 - a) a detailed research proposal, complete with cover page (Form: [Application to Conduct Research](#));
 - b) ethical approval from the research institution (e.g., Memorial University of Newfoundland), where appropriate and applicable.
 - c) a list of schools to be invited to participate in the study;
 - d) participants to be recruited for the study (e.g., Grade 2 teachers; Western Region high school students, etc.);
 - e) sample letter to principal requesting permission to conduct research in the school;
 - f) sample interview questions/survey instrument(s) to be used in the study; and
 - g) sample informed consent letter(s) for students/parents/NLSchools staff (if applicable).

- 1.3 Only the Superintendent of Schools or designate, can approve requests for research activity/surveys at schools and school-related facilities. This does not apply to Government of Canada or Government of Newfoundland and Labrador mandated or supported research projects or surveys.
- 1.4 Notwithstanding NLSchools approval, the school administrator is ultimately responsible for the decision to involve students/parents/teachers/NLSchools staff or facilities under their direction in research activities – unless the research/survey is required by law or mandated by the department.
- 1.5 Although a school administrator may agree to an approved research activity at a school, individual participation by students/parents, teachers or other staff is wholly voluntary.

2 Responsibilities of School Administrators

- 2.1 The school administrator is responsible for providing written consent to the researcher to conduct research in a school, and to obtain the consent of students/parents/staff who would voluntarily be involved in the proposed research.
- 2.2 The use of personal/confidential information that is not completely anonymous requires the notification and prior written approval of the research participants (and/or parents or guardians, if applicable).
 - a) Names, addresses and telephone numbers of parents/students/staff will not be provided to the researcher by the school.
 - b) The principal will send out written consent forms, on behalf of the researcher, to students/parents/staff, in order to obtain required permissions.
 - c) Copies of the completed consent form(s) must be kept at the school for record-keeping purposes. These records are to be maintained by the school administrator.
 - d) Under no circumstances will the administration provide access to information in student records unless and until written notification and approval is obtained by the researcher and copies provided to the school administrator(s).
- 2.3 Research activities must not negatively impact instructional time for students or teachers, or cause undue interruption of regular activities.
- 2.4 School administrators must ensure that ethical research standards are maintained when granting approval to conduct research, as outlined in the Form: Research Approval Conditions Checklist.

3 Responsibilities of Researches (Following NLSchools and School Approval)

- 3.1 The researcher will be directed to consult with the school administrator(s) regarding access to the school(s) and other considerations in conducting the research project.
- 3.2 The researcher is responsible for providing written consent forms to the school administration. The school administration will facilitate obtaining consent from the participating students/parents/staff.
- 3.3 The researcher will ensure the anonymity of research study/survey participants and the confidentiality of all data generated and collected throughout the research period.
- 3.4 If there is potential risk in the research project/survey that participants could relive a traumatic experience which would cause emotional or psychological stress, counselling services and other appropriate supports must be available during, and subsequent to, the data collection process. **Researchers are responsible for providing such supports. These services will not be provided by NLSchools.**
- 3.5 Upon completion of the study, one copy of the report of the results shall be sent to the Superintendent of Schools or designate, and/or a presentation of the results will be delivered to NLSchools personnel/stakeholders. A report of the results must also be provided to administrators/students/parents/staff, upon request.