



Title: **CONDUCTING RESEARCH AT BLOORVIEW SCHOOL AUTHORITY**

Adopted: December 9, 2011

Revised: November 2018

PURPOSE

The purpose of this procedure is to provide information to individuals who are interested in conducting research that involves Bloorview School Authority staff, students or parents. The Authority supports educational research but is also mindful that the students have been entrusted to the school for their personal education. Research must not be done at the expense of students' academic or therapy programs.

GUIDELINES

1. Who May Apply?

Applications are accepted from:

- Masters thesis candidates
- Doctoral thesis candidates
- Individuals who have received internal/external funding
- Holland Bloorview Kids Rehabilitation Hospital and Bloorview School Authority staff/student teachers conducting research for outside agencies or for course work

2. Criteria regarding relevance to education.

- Is the study relevant to education at BSA?
- Is the study relevant to special education or general education?
- Is the study consistent with the Authority's policies and Strategic Plan?
- What is the value and/or benefit of the research to the school?
- Is there an acceptable process for providing feedback of results to participants?

3. Criteria regarding research methodology

Any application received for consideration must have already been approved by the Research Ethics Board or Committee of the researcher's affiliated institution.

In the event that the researcher is not formally affiliated with an institution that has a Research Ethics Board or Committee, then the researcher will have to partner with an institution which does have such a Board or Committee.

Any research to be conducted at Bloorview School must positively meet the following requirements:

- Is the study well designed?
- Is the methodology appropriate given the purpose of the study?
- Are the theory and research questions clear and presented in plain language?
- Are there clear procedures for sample selection?
- Are the research instruments adequate and appropriate

4. Criteria regarding protection of staff and Students

- Are the demands made on the system and on the time of students, families and staff realistic?
- Is the study free from sensitive or intrusive items?
- Are the confidentiality of data and the rights and well being of the participants protected?
- Are there clear procedures for obtaining informed consent?
- Is there an appropriate protocol to deal with sensitive issues arising during research (e.g. students who wish to withdraw from the study, disclosure of sensitive information by participants, debriefing participants)?

5. Any person who will have direct involvement with students must provide certification of a Criminal Records Background Check including Vulnerable Sector Screening prior to commencement of the study.

6. The research must ensure that the confidentiality of information about the school, teachers, and students is protected and that neither the school, teachers nor students are identified in any report.

7. Under Freedom of Information legislation, information collected through school records is not obtained with the expectation of disclosure to independent researchers. The School Authority will not give access to school records and requires written parental consent before identifying particular individuals or groups of students for the researchers.
8. Researchers will not be allowed to gather data at the school during September and after mid-May, except in very unusual circumstances.
9. The study should be minimally intrusive. Demands placed on the school and study participants will not be excessive and may not conflict with students' academic or therapy program.
10. It is the researcher's responsibility to provide a report of the study to the school. The researcher must agree to arrange for feedback of the results to participants.

PROCEDURES - APPLICATION

11. The BSA encourages participation in the Teacher Learning and Leadership Program (TLLP) which is an annual project-based professional learning opportunity for experienced classroom teachers.

The program funds proposals from classroom teachers seeking peer leadership roles in curriculum, instructional practice or supporting other teachers. The program has three goals:

- Create and support opportunities for teacher professional learning
- Foster teacher leadership; and
- Facilitate the sharing of exemplary practices with others for the broader benefit of Ontario's students.

12. The BSA also encourages staff to engage in Action Research. Action research is either research initiated to solve an immediate problem or a reflective process of progressive problem solving led by individuals working with others in teams or as part of a "community of practice".

Action research involves actively participating in a change situation, often via an existing organization, whilst simultaneously conducting research. Action research can also be guided by professional researchers, with the aim of improving the strategies, practices and knowledge of the participants. As designers and stakeholders, researchers work with others to propose a new course of action to help their community improve its work practices.