



## DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION RESEARCH IN NUNAVUT SCHOOLS POLICY

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### **POLICY STATEMENT**

The Department of Education is committed to promoting and monitoring ethical research within Nunavut schools. Research in education can be beneficial to teachers, students, government and society as a whole. In conducting research, every reasonable effort will be taken to ensure that research is culturally sensitive to Inuit and is in accordance with *Inuit Qaujimagatuqangit*, particularly the principles of *Piliriqatigiigniq* (*developing collaborative relationships*) and *Inuuqatigiitsiarniq* (*respecting others and building positive relationships*).

### **PURPOSE**

The purpose of the policy is to:

- establish clear procedures and guidelines for researchers who request to conduct research in Nunavut schools; and
- ensure that research is relevant, respectful, transparent and fair to students and school staff and that appropriate ethical standards of research are upheld.

### **APPLICATION / SCOPE**

This policy applies to all proposals by researchers to conduct research in Nunavut schools involving students or school staff. This includes requests for research projects, surveys and questionnaires from university-based researchers, graduate students, school staff, consultants, researchers not affiliated with an institution and any other individual working for an institution or group requesting to study a particular subject in Nunavut schools.

This policy does not in any way limit the authority of the *Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act*, *Nunavut Act* or *Scientists Act*, where applicable, nor does it limit the authority of the District Education Authority (DEA). As local authorities, the DEA will be able, in partnership with the Department, to suggest modifications for research according to the realities of each community. This policy does not replace or modify the

Nunavut Teachers' Association's (NTA) and Nunavut Employees Union (NEU) rules or the NTA and the NEU Collective Agreement.

## **DEFINITIONS**

*Informed consent:* Informed consent is a voluntary agreement to participate in research. It requires that participants are provided with sufficiently detailed information on the nature and purpose of the research written in plain language at an appropriate reading level, and includes potential risks that may arise from the decision to participate or not to participate.

*Parental consent:* Parental consent refers to the voluntary agreement of a parent or guardian to authorize a student under 16 to participate in ongoing research activities. Parental consent should always be expressed in writing using forms that are made available in all four of Nunavut's official languages.

*Personal information:* as defined under section 2 of the *Access to Information and Protection of Privacy (ATIPP) Act*, personal information means information about an identifiable individual, including:

- the individual's name, address or telephone number;
- the individual's race, colour, national or ethnic origin or religious or political beliefs or associations;
- the individual's age, sex, sexual orientation, marital status or family status;
- an identifying number, symbol or other particular assigned to the individual;
- the individual's fingerprints, blood type or inheritable characteristics;
- information on the individual's health and health care history, including information about a physical or mental disability;
- information about the individual's educational, financial, criminal or employment history;
- anyone else's opinions about the individual; and
- the individual's personal opinions, except where they are about someone else.

*Research:* Research refers to any systematic data-based investigation, qualitative or quantitative, involving individuals or groups of individuals. Research activities may include the use of tests or other forms of assessments, checklists, surveys or questionnaires, document reviews, interviews and observations.

*Research ethics:* Research ethics refers to a set of moral principles that guide research, including confidentiality, informed consent, assent, justice and privacy. It also encompasses *Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit*, particularly the principles of *Piliriqatigiigniq*

*(developing collaborative relationships) and Inuuqatigiitsiarniq (respecting others and building positive relationships).*

*School staff:* School staff refers to teaching staff, secretarial staff, custodial staff and all other individuals employed or hired to assist in the delivery of school programs but does not include an individual employed by a District Education Authority.

*Student assent:* Student assent refers to the affirmative agreement of students under 16 years of age to participate in a research study. Assent by itself is not sufficient. Parental consent is still required for students under the age of 16 even if assent is given.

## **LIST OF AUTHORITATIVE DOCUMENTS:**

- *Education Act;*
- *Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act;*
- *Nunavut Act;*
- *Scientists Act;*
- *Canadian Copyright Act;*
- NTA Collective Agreement;
- NEU Collective Agreement;
- United Nations *Convention on the Rights of the Child.*

## **PRINCIPLES**

The policy is based on the following principles:

*Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit:* Research conducted in Nunavut schools must demonstrate the integration of *Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit* throughout the research process, with particular emphasis on the principles of *Piliriqatigiinni*, developing collaborative relationships, and *Inuuqatigiitsiarniq*, respecting others and building positive relationships

*Informed consent:* Participation in research studies is based on the voluntary and informed consent of individuals participating in the study.

*Justice:* Students and school staff should have the opportunity to participate in research that could benefit them and must not be unfairly advantaged or disadvantaged as a result of participating or not participating in the research.

*Research ethics:* Appropriate standards of research ethics, including the integration of *Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit* principles and culturally sensitivity to Inuit, must be maintained

throughout the research process, including planning, data collection and use, storage and reporting.

*Privacy and confidentiality:* Researchers conducting studies in Nunavut schools must comply with all of the access to information and protection of privacy requirements that apply to the Government of Nunavut. The privacy and confidentiality of personal information must be maintained at all times.

## **ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

*Deputy Minister:* Approves proposals for research normally within 60 calendar days. Approval is issued after consultation with the DEA and the Principal. If the proposal is not approved, written notification should be provided by the Deputy Minister to the researcher, who will have 30 calendar days to submit a revised proposal. The Deputy Minister will maintain a list of all research proposals related to education, schools or students in Nunavut, including approved and rejected research proposals for a particular school or district, as well as copies of research reports.

*Nunavut Research Institute (NRI):* NRI is responsible for licensing research in the health, natural and social science disciplines, as required under Nunavut's *Scientists Act*. A research proposal may include school-based research and one or more of the above-mentioned areas. In such cases, the researcher will need approval from both the Department of Education and the NRI.

*DEAs:* Decide whether a researcher may conduct research within a given school, following the recommendation of the Principal. DEAs will be given 30 calendar days to review and approve research proposals in their schools or their districts. DEAs recommend the approval or rejection of research proposal to the Deputy Minister.

*Principal:* Recommends that a researcher be allowed to conduct research within their school. The Principal also monitors the researcher while on school premises to ensure that the research is carried out according to the procedures and guidelines set out by this policy.

Principals may terminate or temporarily suspend research activities when they are:

- not in line with the research purpose and methodology described in the research proposal; or
- linked to negative incidents that occur within school.

The principal will notify the researcher in writing that the activities related to the research have been suspended. The decision will be communicated to the DEA and to the Department.

The researcher may submit a new application to the department within 30 working days. In the new request, the researcher must clearly demonstrate how they intend to proceed to prevent the similar incidents from recurring.

The Researcher: is responsible for:

- obtaining written approval from the Department of Education to conduct research after obtaining a license issued by Nunavut Research Institute;
- obtaining approval from the principal for the use of any space within the school, and for identifying when and where they must be supervised or accompanied by a member of the school staff;
- ensuring that all appropriate ethical standards are upheld; and
- communicating regularly with the principal and the classroom teacher about the progress and results of the project.

Teacher: Confirms that the objectives and requirements of the research project are consistent with class objectives or fit harmoniously with lessons. The teacher is always present in class when the research is ongoing. Teacher reports any perceived risks or negative impacts to students to researcher and principal immediately.

## **PROVISIONS OF THIS POLICY**

Procedures:

Applications for authorization to conduct research in Nunavut Schools are preceded by a license issued by Nunavut Research Institute (NRI), where applicable.

Prior to beginning research, the researcher should demonstrate knowledge and awareness of *Inuit Qaujimagatuqangit* principles and cultural sensitivity to Inuit. If a researcher does not have the knowledge and awareness of *Inuit Qaujimagatuqangit* principles or cultural sensitivity to Inuit, the researcher is expected to seek such training which is offered in local communities in Nunavut.

### School-based Employees (NTA and NEU)

School staff (NTA and NEU) cannot be held responsible for any incident resulting from research activities in a school. The researcher is solely responsible for any incidents that occur when research activities are ongoing.

### Research Proposals

All proposals for research to be conducted in a Nunavut school must be submitted in writing to the Deputy Minister of the Department of Education, normally in the form of a research proposal approved by the researcher's institution and include a copy of the approval letter from the Research Ethics Board of the researcher's institution. A copy of the entire Research Ethics Board submission package should be provided with submission to Deputy Minister.

Department of Education school staff may apply to conduct research under this policy. In these cases, school staff should be transparent and identify themselves as a department employee and must include a statement in any presentation or publication that the results communicated in the paper do not represent the official position of the Department.

Other Government of Nunavut departments or agencies may direct their research requests directly to the Department of Education.

The research proposal must clearly describe the nature and purpose of the study, including details of the methodology, the participants required, what assistance is needed from school staff, the time frame of the study and how the research results will be communicated, publicized, released, disseminated, applied, used, stored or disposed of.

In addition to the research proposal, researchers must also submit:

- consent/assent forms for research participants;
- verification of a criminal record check, including vulnerable sector check, not older than 3 months, for research involving minors;
- NRI authorization, where applicable; and
- a letter describing the relevance and benefits of the study to research participants and demonstrating the integration of *Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit* and cultural sensitivity to Inuit throughout the research process.

### Recruitment of Research Participants

Researchers must ensure that the recruitment of research participants for the study causes minimal disruption to students, school staff and the operations of the school.

Approval may be granted to researchers seeking to recruit participants in class providing that minimal class time (less than 10 minutes) is required.

For privacy reasons, researchers should not use email addresses, home/cell numbers, social media accounts or academic lists as a means to recruit participants.

Research participants must be informed of the nature and purpose of the research study, including any potential risks of participation at the time of recruitment in plain language.

### Consent to Participate

Written consent must be obtained from students and school staff prior to their participation in the research study. Parental consent is also required for a student under 16 to participate in any research study.

Students aged 16 and over may sign their own consent forms. Out of respect for students under 16, student assent should also be obtained particularly in cases where the child can comprehend and appreciate what participation involves. The researcher must ensure that both students and parents fully understand the research objectives and risks associated with participation in the research activities.

DEAs, school staff, students and their parents must be fully informed on the nature and purpose of the research, including any potential risks and may, upon request, review any of the research documents or withdraw from the research at any time without consequence.

Permission must be sought from students if any of their course materials (for example, papers, assignments, tests, exams, marks, etc.) are to be used for research purposes. All identifiable information should be removed from the materials when using them for research purposes.

Any video, audio recordings or photography of the research participants require written consent in addition to consent required to participate in the research study.

***The consent/assent letter for research participants must clearly provide:***

- Project title;
- A description of the research being conducted, including the purpose, objectives, aims of the study at a reading comprehension level that is appropriate for both the students and parents;
- A description of the activities/tasks/questionnaires that students will complete for the research at a reading comprehension level that is appropriate for both the students and parents;
- Complete contact information for the researcher and/or their supervisor, where any questions/concerns can be directed;
- Details on the type of data that will be collected and how privacy and confidentiality will be maintained;
- The estimated time commitment outside of regular classroom hours;
- The educational value of the research and how the research relates to the course objectives;
- A statement of informant rights “I have been fully informed of the objectives of the project being conducted. I understand these objectives and consent to participate in the project. I understand that steps will be taken to ensure the confidentiality of my participation unless I consent to being identified. I also understand that, if I wish to withdraw from the study, I may do so without any repercussions;”
- A statement that the Department of Education is not liable for any incident that occurs as a result of research activities;
- Any potential risks that may be associated with participation;
- Printed name of participant, signature of participant, witness signature, date of consent.

**Privacy and Confidentiality of Data Collected**

The privacy and confidentiality of research participants and their personal information is of vital importance and must be maintained at all times.

- Researchers must consider in the design of studies that students tend to stay close together in classrooms and laboratories and are therefore able to read the answers of other participants in the study, survey or questionnaire. Therefore, anonymity is a concern at the time of data collection in a group setting such as a classroom.
- Care should be taken to remove all personal identifiers from the data collected. Teachers, teaching assistants, principals, students and parents must not be able to identify participants through the data collected;
- When the research involves the collection of human biological material, rights and copyright interests of participants and communities must be specified in the research agreement. The roles and responsibilities relating to data collection, storage and use



should also be indicated in the document. The Department of Health should be consulted.

### Indemnity

The Department of Education should ensure that all applications for proposed research projects be reviewed for the need to have an indemnity clause in favour of the Government of Nunavut, based on the inherent risks of the research being proposed.

The indemnity would ensure that the Government of Nunavut is protected in a situation where, despite all the precautions outlined in this policy, the researcher violates the ATIPP Act or other legislation. If such a breach occurs and legal injuries result, the Government of Nunavut could recover any damages it had to pay to the victims of the wrongful conduct from the researcher and/or their insurer.

For complex or unusual research projects, the Department of Education may wish to consult with the Department of Justice to consider the type and scope of the research being proposed, any potential risks involved in the project, as well as the researcher's financial circumstances and insurance coverage, to decide whether an indemnity is appropriate.

### Research Results

A full copy of the research report must be provided to the Department of Education once the study is complete.

Upon request, the Department of Education may make copies of the report available to those who participated or were involved in the study.

## **PREROGATIVE OF CABINET**

Nothing in this policy shall in any way be construed to limit the prerogative of the Executive Council to make decisions or take action respecting the provisions of the policy.

## **SUNSET CLAUSE**

This policy shall be in effect from the date of the signature until September 30, 2020

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Premier

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Date