



# CONDUCTING RESEARCH IN CATHOLIC SCHOOLS BROKEN BAY

Guidelines for Applicants

July 2023

**CATHOLIC SCHOOLS BROKEN BAY**

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## **1. INTRODUCTION**

Catholic Schools Broken Bay (CSBB) welcomes applications for research undertaken in its schools as a way of supporting educational advancement.

However, CSBB has a responsibility to ensure that such research does not infringe the rights or welfare of students in its schools nor those of CSBB personnel; that research activities do not hamper educational programs or activities; and that any person authorised to conduct research in CSBB is suitable to work with children and young people.

Accordingly, research applicants are required to submit, for approval, a project proposal to the Governance, Legal and Risk Workstream, using the attached Application Form, before undertaking any research in CSBB schools.

If the project proposal is approved centrally and by relevant Principals, the applicant will receive written acknowledgement, any specific instructions, and a letter of introduction to the Principals of the schools concerned.

## **2. PROCEDURE**

1. Applications for all research activities in schools must be made to CSBB Governance, Legal and Risk Workstream via email [csbb.governance@dbb.catholic.edu.au](mailto:csbb.governance@dbb.catholic.edu.au).
2. Applications should be made in accordance with the instructions in these Guidelines for Applicants and on the Application Form and include all required documentation. Proposals cannot be assessed unless adequate detail is provided.
3. Proposals that are required by university protocols to be approved by its research ethics committee must be approved by that committee before final approval will be granted.
4. Research applications will be reviewed by the relevant CSBB Workstream. In some situations, the applicant may be asked to clarify or make modifications to the proposal.
5. Applicants must receive written approval from the Senior Lead, Governance, Legal and Risk Workstream, authorising them to approach specified school Principals before conducting their research.

It is a condition of approval that, upon completion of a project, the researcher will provide CSBB with a report of the findings of the study and grant CSBB the right to disseminate this report to CSBB personnel.

### 3. CRITERIA FOR APPROVING APPLICATIONS

Applicants should be aware that proposals to conduct research in CSBB schools will be assessed to ensure:

1. that the rights of students and staff are protected
2. that the welfare of students and staff is ensured
3. that CSBB's 'duty of care' obligations are not compromised
4. the probity of research undertaken within CSBB schools
5. that the research project is of sufficient educational value, purpose, or significance
6. that the research methodologies are appropriate.

Applicants should be aware that proposals will also be reviewed considering the following criteria:

7. that participating schools and staff confidentiality is ensured
8. that the confidentiality and privacy of participants is protected including that persons other than the researcher must not be able to link the information collected to individual participants, and is ideally anonymous if possible.
9. that procedures for storing, accessing, and disposing of data which enables participants to be identified, such as audiotapes and videotapes, are documented and provided to CSBB
10. that the consent of participants is obtained before research commences
11. that the consent of a primary caregiver is obtained if the participant is under the age of 18
12. that all potential participants and, if they are under the age of 18, their primary caregivers, will be supplied with an information sheet which outlines the nature and conduct of the research project
13. that classroom observations will not be made without the informed consent of the class teacher
14. that students and staff are treated with sensitivity and with due regard to their personal and private lives and their cultural, religious and other beliefs
15. research staff conduct themselves whenever at a school according to the CSBB Code of Conduct.

### 4. ETHICAL REQUIREMENTS

CSBB requires all projects involving human participants to be conducted in conformity with relevant professional codes and guidelines, including, but not limited to:

1. National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research (2007, Updated 2018)
2. National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) Guidelines
3. Privacy Act (1988)
4. Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act (1998) NSW

5. Values and Ethics - Guidelines for Ethical Conduct in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Research
6. Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research

Note that the Guidelines refer not only to the physical and mental wellbeing of participants, but also to matters of confidentiality, privacy and consent.

## **5. CHILD PROTECTION REQUIREMENTS**

Any person or organisation whose employees will be conducting or helping with research involving 'direct, unsupervised contact' with children (persons under 18 years of age) is subject to child protection legislation including: Child Protection (Working with Children) Act 2012 and Children's Guardian Act 2019.

For all persons conducting or assisting with research where a Working With Children's Check is required i.e. 'direct, unsupervised contact' with children, it is the responsibility of CSBB to ensure Working With Children Checks are verified. Researchers are to provide CSBB with their WWCC No. and Date of Birth for verification purposes. Researchers are to ensure that any assistants working with them and/or on their behalf in undertaking the research comply with the relevant children protection requirements and where necessary provide their WWCC No. and Date of Birth for verification.

Persons conducting or assisting with research in a child related role should receive a safeguarding induction pack.

## **6. APPLICATION PROCESS**

1. The responses on the Application Form and supporting documents should be answered in terms that are readily understood by individuals not specialist in the subject, avoiding highly specialised expressions and acronyms.
2. The Application Form Certification page must be signed by the Principal Researcher.
3. The Application Form and supporting documents are to be sent to:

Senior Workstream Lead – Governance, Legal and Risk  
Catholic Schools Broken Bay  
Caroline Chisholm Centre  
Building 2, 423 Pennant Hills Road  
Pennant Hills NSW 2120  
Email: [csbb.governance@dbb.catholic.edu.au](mailto:csbb.governance@dbb.catholic.edu.au)

Supporting documents may include:

- Information and Consent Form (Application Form - Appendix 1)
- written undertaking of compliance with the Working With Children Check

- questionnaires, interview schedules or other data collection instruments including tests or stimulus materials
  - any other relevant materials
  - University ethics committee approval.
4. After reviewing the application, the Senior Workstream Lead – Governance, Legal and Risk may request that you make amendments or provide clarification prior to approving your proposal.
  5. Research may not commence in schools administered by Catholic Schools Broken Bay until the applicant has received written approval from the Senior Workstream Lead – Governance, Legal and Risk. This approval will include letters of introduction to the Principals of targeted schools.
  6. Where a proposal is given approval by the Senior Workstream Lead – Governance, Legal and Risk, the period for which the approval is valid is twelve months. For continuing projects, a Renewal Form should be completed each year until the project is complete or until three (3) years have elapsed since the original approval. If the project is completed or abandoned, or if three (3) years have passed since the original approval, a Final Report form should be completed and forwarded to the Governance, Legal and Risk Workstream.