

POLICY
RI SCHOOL FOR THE DEAF
BOARD OF TRUSTEES

RESEARCH PROTECTION POLICY

Guiding Principle and Purpose

Rhode Island School for the Deaf is committed to protecting the rights and privacy of the students and families it serves.

Policy

The basic purpose of the RI School for the Deaf is to educate children. All other objectives, however worthy, are only secondary to this goal. It is the policy of the school system, therefore, to authorize only those research projects that could be of benefit to the school or the population it serves when a review shows that the subject area being studied is aligned with the goals of improved teaching, language development, and learning while not unduly taking away from instructional time and school resources. Approval by the researcher's IRB and/or the building administrator does not guarantee approval.

All research activities must be coordinated through the Director of the school. In some instances approval is not required for the use of data and summary statistics available in public records such as on the RI public education Internet site: Ex. listings of aggregated student and staff data. In these instances, the researcher may use the data presented in the reports as long as the source is cited and any modifications or analysis done by the researcher is clearly delineated. The Director will inform the Board of Trustees of all research requests and approvals.

Who May Conduct Research

Any academic or professional organization, or any individual doing master's or doctoral work may submit a proposal to conduct research. Doctoral and master's candidates must submit written evidence that their proposed research has been approved by their University's IRB and will be supervised by their advisor(s).

Any requests to conduct research involving students and families will be reviewed and evaluated carefully by RISDeaf's Director before being shared with the Board of Trustees. No research involving students and/or their families can be conducted at or through RI School for the Deaf without prior approval, prior written notification to parents and prior written consent from each student's parent or guardian. In addition to approval by the Director and the oversight of the Board of Trustees, express permission of the parents/guardians (or the student if 18 years of age or older) is required when the following research activities are proposed:

- 1) Student interviews, surveys, or assessments. Certain student surveys that are developed or administered through the use of funds received from the U.S. Department of Education may require additional safeguards.

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- 2) Classroom observation that results in obtaining individually identifiable student or teacher information.

The informed, written parental consent is a requirement of the Federal Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) (20 U.S.C. § 1232h: 34 CFR Part 98) and Rhode Island regulations

Classroom observations, or interviews/surveys with teachers/administrators in school that do not result in data that would identify any student do not require parent/guardian permission. However, copies of these instruments must be provided with the application materials.

Note that for parent/guardian approval, RISDeaf requires “active consent” of the parent/guardian. This means that the parent/guardian has received a letter and has completed and returned a written form giving permission for the child to participate. No child may participate in the absence of the signed form.

The permission letter to the parent/guardian must: 1) describe the purposes, procedures and content of the research, including a statement of any possible risks; 2) indicate the types of activities that the student will engage in when participating in the research, the amount of participation time by the student and the start and end dates of the study; 3) describe, if applicable, the data elements that will be collected from each student and indicate how the researcher will keep this information confidential; and 4) identify all individuals responsible for the research, including their institutional affiliation, by providing complete contact information including an address and phone number. Please use the language preferred by the parent/guardian in the request letter along with the accompanying English version.

Implementation

Individuals requesting to conduct research involving students and/or families of The RI School for the Deaf are asked to complete an initial application provided by the school. This application must be submitted in writing to the Director along with a detailed description of the project, a clear explanation of the research intent and methodology, and evidence of university Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval. The application must also include copies of letters of description to be sent to parents/guardians and students over the age of fourteen years and consent forms to be signed by parent or a guardian and those students over the age of fourteen years (unless the school has documentation that the student is not capable of such a decision).

This information will then be reviewed by the Director and shared with the Board to ensure the full protection of all rights and responsibilities of participants and to determine if the study is compatible with the mission and values of RI School for the Deaf. When a research project is approved, a supervisor or administrator will be assigned to monitor the

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implementation of the project.

Initial approval by the School does not ensure that selected teachers will be willing or able to participate. These decisions will be at the discretion of the Director and his/her faculty.

Other Research Requirements

1) If reference is made to the RI School for the Deaf as the source of the data in the study, then approval must be received from the Director prior to the dissemination of any report. Otherwise, no reference can be made to the participation of the RI School for the Deaf in the study.

2) Note that if the research project extends beyond the completion date indicated in the *Application to Conduct Research*, a written application must be submitted for re-approval. In addition, it is at the discretion of the Director to extend the research project beyond the scheduled completion date.

3) After all forms have been submitted and approved, the researcher may begin the study. Once the study is completed, a copy of the final research report must be filed with the Board; it is also customary to provide a copy to participating schools and/or programs. Whenever feasible, the researcher should visit the school to explain the findings to the the Director and other school staff.

4) If substantive changes are made to a project after it has begun, such as requesting additional data, or a change in approach or participating groups/schools, the researcher must submit:

- Cover letter;
- Application (with the amendment to study box checked); and
- Amended proposal that highlights what changed, either using a copy of the original proposal with typewritten annotations, or a letter documenting what has changed by making reference to the original page numbers and sections.

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Name of agency _____
_____ *will be submitted to another agency for possible funding*

Name of agency _____

9. Nature of Study (check all that apply):

Classroom Observation

Staff/Teacher Interviews/Surveys

Student Interviews/Surveys

Student Assessment

Student Records that are covered under RI Records Regulations

Other (please specify):

10. Subjects of Study (check all that apply):

Students *Teachers* *Administrators*

11. Grade Level(s) _____ *Other* _____

12. Anticipated Start Date:

13. Anticipated End Date:

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14. General description of this research:

Purpose:

Outline of Procedures:

Description of students from RISD to be involved: (age, numbers, academic level, etc.)

Description of data required from school record, if applicable:

Description of specific procedures actively involving students, parents or staff:
(If tests, questionnaires, interview protocols, etc. Are to be used, please furnish copies.)

15. Benefits and Risks:

Indicate benefits of this research for students, staff, and or parents of RISD, and for the Deaf/hard-of-hearing population, in general:

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What risks, if any, would this research involve for participants.

16. Does the sponsoring institution have an **Institutional Review Board (IRB)** for the protection of human subjects, which complies with Federal regulations?

_____ *yes* _____ *no*

If yes, check one:

_____ *This project has been approved by the IRB (attach copy of approval and any conditions)*

_____ *Plans are to submit this project to the IRB before initiating the project at RISD. RISD will be furnished with the evidence of approval before the research is initiated.*

17. **Agreement:**

In the event that this project is approved for conduct at RISD, the researchers agree to the following conditions:

- a. To adhere to the purpose and procedures of the project as approved by the school.
- b. To restrict all data gathered from RISD to this project unless otherwise specified.
- c. To furnish RISD with progress notes if requested.
- d. To provide RISD with one copy of all publications, including dissertations, reports, articles and papers, describing the completed project.
- e. To provide feedback to RISD staff if appropriate, through presentations, workshops, etc.
- f. To acknowledge the cooperation of RISD in any published reports about this project.

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- g. To give permission for RISD to cite the ongoing or completed project in its own publications, with credit to the investigator(s).
 - h. To comply with all Federal and Rhode Island special education regulations concerning confidentiality.
 - i. To comply with all regulations for the protection of human rights.
 - j. To report only data which cannot be traced directly or by inference to specific students, families, family members of the student, or former schools attended.
 - k. To destroy all materials gathered, which may contain personally identifiable information after the purposes for which the materials were gathered has been completed.
18. COPIES OF THE FOLLOWING SHOULD BE FORWARDED TO RISDeaf
- A one page abstract of the proposed project
 - A detailed copy of the project, where available
 - Copies of tests, questionnaires, interview questions to be used
 - IRB approval, if applicable
 - The resume of the principal investigator

19. Certification

I have read and understand all the Policy and Guidelines for Conducting Educational Research at The RI School for the Deaf, including confidentiality of student records and ethical treatment of human subjects. I agree to adhere to and be bound by all requirements outlined in the Policy and Guidelines

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Name (Print): _____

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Check if Requesting Re-approval:

Amendment to study

Extension of Time request for study

Explanatory Comments:

Initials _____ **Date** _____

DATE: _____

THIS RESEARCH PROJECT IS

_____ **APPROVED**

_____ **NOT APPROVED AT THIS TIME**

COMMENTS:

**NANCY MAGUIRE HEATH
DIRECTOR
RI SCHOOL FOR THE DEAF**