Rationale

This policy provides information for individuals or organisatons who are seeking to access Lutheran Education Australia (LEA) schools for the purpose of undertaking research. It is expected that when researchers conduct research in LEA schools they do so on the basis that the findings may assist to improve student learning outcomes and incease school effectiveness.

# Researchers in Lutheran schools policy

# *A conference in each region*

The data held by LEA is for the purposes of providing leadership and support services to schools. Individuals and organisatons seeking access to LEA data will need to demonstrate that the release of that data will have real benefit for students and / or leaders in Lutheran schools.

Principles

Capacity building: LEA is a learning organisation which values the sharing of knowledge across the education sector in order to encourage creativity, innovation, improved learning outcomes, continual school improvement and collaboration.

Adding Value: Research findings and access to information should provide a potential contribution to existing knowledge and a balance between short term and long term benefits.

Maintain propriety: In order to protect the welfare and rights of individuals, access to information and exchange of knowledge must conform to legal and ethical requirements. This policy reflects the obligations on researchers outlined in the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) documents:

* *National Statement on ethical Conduct of Human Research* (2007) Updated May 2012
* *Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research* (2007)

The NHMRC statements can be viewed at [www.nhmrc.gov.au](http://www.nhmrc.gov.au)

Procedures for seeking access to Lutheran schools for the purpose of research

LEA approval: All non school based researchers and school personnel wanting to conduct research related to their post graduate studies need to seek LEA approval to conduct research in a Lutheran school. Procedures to be followed for obtaining approval from LEA and an applicaton form are in the appendices to this policy.

Ethics approval: Since research conducted in schools falls within the requirements of the NHMRC, evidence of approval from an ethics committee is normally required.

School approval: As collection of data can be time consuming for schools and may divert away from higher priority tasks, the ultimate decision to allow the research to proceed within a particular school rests fully with the principal.

*Note:*

*The term ‘school’ in this policy includes the early childhood centres, P-12 colleges, secondary colleges, secondary schools and primary schools which operate in the name of the Lutheran Church of Australia.*

*Approved by BLEA March 2017*

*Review due 2020*



Appendix 1

Procedures for obtaining approval to conduct

research in a Lutheran school

Step 1: Seeking LEA approval

LEA assesses applications to conduct research in Lutheran schools to ensure that proposals are in keeping with the mission of Lutheran education. LEA will not approve applications from researchers where:

1. the content of the research proposal may raise issues contrary to the ethos of the Lutheran Church of Australia
2. the potential benefits of the research to Lutheran education or the broader community are not demonstrated, or the research is for commercial, journalistic or marketing purposes
3. benefits of the research are outweighed by the demands placed on school resources
4. required documentation is incomplete or inadequate
5. the study method is inapropriate
6. the researcher lacks the experience or qualifications to conduct research on:

* the private affairs of participants, eg, focus on the body, body image, family relations
* negative risk-taking behaviour, eg, under-age drinking, promiscuity, illicit drug taking, violence, stealing, carrying weapons, suicide

1. the research focuses on behaviour outside the experience and age range of the participants
2. there is an unacceptable level of risk to the wellbeing of the participants
3. additional support is not provided in relation to matters that may be disturbing to participants
4. confidentiality and privacy of participants are not adequately protected
5. inappropriate inducements are offered to participants or schools

To seek approval to conduct research in Lutheran schools from LEA, researchers must submit an *Applicaton to conduct research in Lutheran schools* (see Appendix 2). Any modification to the research proposal will require submission of an amended application to LEA.

LEA approval is given on the understanding that any report or summary of the research findings will be made available to the participating school/s and LEA, preferably in an electronic format emailed to [LEADirector@lutheran.edu.au](mailto:LEADirector@lutheran.edu.au)

Step 2: Seeking ethics approval

Researchers will need to determine whether they are required to seek approval from an ethics committee by identifying which of the following categories (1-4) applies to them.

Category 1: non school based researchers

These researchers are typically:

* professional researchers working in an institution with a research function
* government departments or Lutheran organisations
* students carrying out honours and postgraduate degrees
* undergraduate students (other than student teachers engaged in a practicum)

Researchers in Category 1 are required to obtain approval from an ethics committee unless they can demonstrate that the nature of the research is not subject to review by a Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC).

Private consultants or market researchers will generally not be granted approval to conduct research in Lutheran schools. Any exception to this would require the researcher to enter into a collaborative arrangement with an institution which has access to an ethics committee.

Category 1 researchers may apply for LEA approval while their HREC application is being processed. If all other LEA requirements have been met, provisional approval may be given. However, the research may not be commenced in a Lutheran school until LEA has received a copy of the notification of HREC approval, together with any modifications sought by the ethics committee.

Category 2: school based researchers: school personnel conducting individual research as part of their studies

These researchers are typically teachers conducting a research project as part of an honours or postgraduate study seeking to involve students from their own classroom, school or other Lutheran school.

The same requirements for ethics approval as required for Category 1 researchers apply.

Category 3: school based researchers: Lutheran schools undertaking their own research

This category applies to school personnel who seek to survey students, parents or staff regarding school initiated projects such as curriculum or policy development, evaluation of programs, pastoral care matters and the like.

Principals have responsibility for determining whether ethics approval is necessary for internal research, based on the nature of the data being collected. Generally, ethics approval should be sought for research where, for example, the data being collected is of a personal or sensitive nature, or individuals would be upset by the questions, or participants could be identified.

If ethics approval needs to be obtained and the project is being undertaken in partnership with an external institution, approval by that institution’s ethics committee could be sought.

Category 4: school based researchers: student teachers engaged in research during their practicum

These researchers are typically undergraduate students who, as part of their teacher training, may seek to conduct small scale research projects that involve collecting and analysing data from school students.

Step 3: Seeking approval from the school

Once approval for a research proposal is obtained from LEA and ethics approval has been obtained where applicable, researchers need to contact the principal of the school. It should be noted that gaining LEA approval in no way commits the principal to allow the research to be conducted in the school.

In determining whether to accept a research proposal, the principal will consider the potential benefits of the research to the school and to the wider community, weighed up against any disruption and the level of commitment of school resources likely to occur.

The following documentation must be provided by the researcher to assit the principal in deciding whether to allow the research to be conducted in the school:

* A cover letter to the principal inviting participation and providing details about the level of involvement expected of the school
* A plain language statement (PLS) for the principal describing the research
* Documents to be used in the project, eg, PLS for participants / parents, consent forms, etc
* A copy of the LEA letter of approval which may include conditions placed on the approval
* A copy of notification of ethics committee approval if applicable
* Confirmation of the researcher’s approval to work with children (eg, *Working with children suitability card* in Queensland, etc) if the researcher is visiting a school

All researchers wanting to work with students less than 18 years of age or enter a Lutheran school site are required to seek guidance from the appropriate organisation within the respective jurisdiction/s (eg, *Queensland Commission for Children and Young People* for Queensland, etc)

Applications for research involving direct contact with students will not be approved if the researcher cannot provide evidence of approval to work with children





Application to conduct research in a Lutheran school

Appendix 2

This applicaton form is intended for researchers wishing to conduct research with Lutheran Education Australia schools.

Research must be able to demonstrate that it will assist in maintaining and improving the provision of quality Lutheran education.

Any approvals are granted in principle only and are subject to the approval of the participating school principal/s.

All applicatons are to be addressed to:

Executive Director

Lutheran Education Australia

197 Archer Street

North Adelaide SA 5006

Email [LEADirector@lutheran.edu.au](mailto:LEADirector@lutheran.edu.au)

|  |
| --- |
| **Principal researcher contact details**  Name  Address  Telephone Mobile Fax  Email  Are you currently employed in Lutheran education? Yes No  If ‘yes’, please specify where and in what role |
| 1. **Title of** **proposal** |
| 1. **Details if proposal is part** **of a tertiary course**   Qualification  School / faculty  Institution  Address of institution  Supervisor  Name    Telephone  Email |
| 1. **Category of researcher** (from Appendix 1 categories) 1 2 3 4 |
| 1. **Name of Human Research Ethics Commiteee which is reviewing** **the proposal**   If no approval has been sought please give reasons:  Service_Learning_FOOTER_LOGO.jpg |
| 1. **Proposed date for starting research** Month Year   Anticipated end date Month Year |
| 1. **Reasons for wanting to involve Lutheran schools in the** **proposal** |
| 1. **Contribution of proposal to education or broader** **community** |
| 1. **Number of schools to** **be approached**   Primary schools Secondary schools P-12 schools |
| 1. **Approximate number of participants** **sought**   Students (indicate year level and number)  Parents  Teachers  Principals  Other (specify) |
| 1. **Demands on participants** (include time allocation and other commitments for students, staff, school/s and other participants)   Students  Parents  Teachers  Principals  Other (specify)  **Inducements**: are participants or schools to be offered any inducements to participate in the research?  Yes No  If ‘yes’, please give details |
| 1. **Consent of participants** (indicate how consent will be sought) |
| 1. **Intrusiveness** (identify any part of the research that is potentially intrusive, upsetting or incriminating to participants) |
| 1. **Confidentiality** (provide outline of arrangements for protecting confidentiality of data and ensuring privacy of participants) |
| 1. **Agreement to provide reports and to grant Lutheran Education Australia the right to publish a summary of the report**   I agree to provide Lutheran Education Australia with a full copy or summary of the findings of the research described in this application.  I further agree to provide participating schools with a suitable report.  I grant Lutheran Education Australia the right to publish an edited summary of the research findings using either the print or electronic media.  I agree to protect the confidentiality of data collected during this project and to ensure privacy of all participants.  Signataure of applicant: ………………….………….. Date ………. / ………. / ………. |
| 1. **Declaration**   I declare that the above information is true and correct  Signataure of applicant: ………………….………….. Date ………. / ………. / ………. |

Please attach copies of the following documents with this application: √ if attached

* Letter of request to principal
* Plain language statement (PLS) describing the research for the principal
* Equivalent statement for parents (if applicable) and for participants (in an age appropriate style)
* Consent form for participants
* Consent form for parents (if students are participants)
* Notification of approval from HREC (if available)
* Copy of approval to work with children (if applicable)
* Any additional information to support the application (optional)