



Research Ethics Boards (Behavioural and Biomedical)

PARENTAL CONSENT

In some cases, the committee will consider waiving the requirement for parental consent. This waiver will normally only be considered for older adolescents, such as high school students, and for protocols clearly below minimal risk. In very limited circumstances, the committee will consider a waiver of parental consent for above minimal risk procedures when it can be demonstrated that the requirement to obtain such consent would constitute an insurmountable barrier to the conduct of the research.

Researchers asking for a waiver of parental consent must justify to the committee:

1. Why such a waiver is necessary for the conduct of the research.
2. That the research presents no risk to the participants.
3. That adequate steps have been taken to inform the parents of the research, and to given them the option to withdraw their child's participation if they so choose.
4. That each participant in the study has the capacity to consent (i.e., is cognitively mature enough to understand the consent procedure, and emotionally mature enough to understand the implications of giving consent). Researchers must outline the procedure by which they will establish that prospective participants have sufficient capacity to consent to the research. For example, this may be done by use of a diagnostic screening tool, or by consulting an objective third party who is in a position to make such a judgment (e.g., a teacher or guidance counsellor), etc.

Note that other organizations and school boards may require parental consent for adolescents; researchers must respect wishes of that organization and seek parental consent if requested by them.