



# Conducting Educational Research in Schools

2025

# Conducting Educational Research in Schools

## Supporting Guidelines

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# Overview

The Kawartha Pine Ridge District School Board (KPR) supports educational research through the Research Advisory Committee. This guideline has been developed to set out procedures by which such research can be conducted within the school district. While the Board acknowledges the value of educational research, it is also responsible for safeguarding the privacy and safety of the educational community. Educational research will not take place at the expense of student achievement and well-being.

Research can be conducted by external partners (including individuals, agencies and institutions) or internal board employees. In all cases, whether the research is internal or external, all associated organizations must commit to the criteria and principles of quality research and the protection of individuals as outlined in this guideline. Principals may elect to refer questions from applicants, from their staff members or from the school community to the Research Advisory Committee if needed.

## 1. General

- 1.1 These procedures set out the process for applications and approvals for research in schools by individuals, agencies and institutions. They also establish the membership of the Research Advisory Committee.
- 1.2 Research projects involving students will generally be permitted between October and May within a single school year.
- 1.3 All research must explicitly demonstrate relevance to KPR as expressed within the Board Action Plan and other strategic priorities. The committee will not approve market research.
- 1.4 An ethical review of the proposed research must be completed and approved according to the guidelines of the associated institution/agency **prior to the submission of the KPR research application.**
- 1.5 The research focus and procedures must be consistent with all Board policies.
- 1.6 All research projects must be designed to produce minimal disruption to staff and students.
- 1.7 The number of projects approved by the committee will be dependent on the number of requests and the availability of suitable situations to meet the conditions of the research.
- 1.8 A record of approved research projects, as well as the schools, classes and students involved, will be maintained by the designated superintendent.
- 1.9 The use of the results of the research must be clearly outlined and a process in place to ensure that the Research Advisory Committee shall receive a summary report of the results prior to any public disclosure or publication.
- 1.10 The decisions of the Research Advisory Committee will be final.

## **2. Research Advisory Committee**

### **2.1 Purpose**

2.1.1 The Research Advisory Committee will review and respond to applications for research projects in accordance with these procedures.

### **2.2 Composition**

The committee will be composed of representatives from the following groups:

2.2.1 Designated Superintendent of Schools

2.2.2 one (1) elementary school administrator;

2.2.3 one (1) secondary school administrator;

2.2.4 one (1) member of psychological services;

2.2.5 one (1) member representing Teaching and Learning Department;

2.2.6 one (1) member representing Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Department;

2.2.7 one (1) member representing Indigenous Education Department; and

2.2.8 one (1) member representing Commissioner's Office of Human Rights, Equity and Accessibility

The designated Superintendent of schools shall appoint a Chair.

### **2.3 Mandate**

Normally, the Committee meets a minimum of 4 times per year at the call of the Chair to:

2.3.1 review research proposals and approve those which meet the criteria outlined;

2.3.2 identify areas where research would be of potential value to the system;

2.3.3 offer advice and assistance, when appropriate, on matters of research methodology, statistical analysis, etc.;

2.3.4 monitor the quantity of topics of research to ensure a fair distribution of research studies throughout KPR schools; and

2.3.5 promote research and a culture of inquiry in schools, while also protecting staff and student privacy and confidentiality, and ensuring research aligns with the Board Action and Strategic Plans.

### **2.4 Roles and Responsibilities**

2.4.1 Role of the Chair:

2.4.1.1 call, organize and chair meetings;

2.4.1.2 ensure compliance with the contents of this guideline (Conducting Educational Research in Schools);

- 2.4.1.3 liaise with associated organizations (e.g. research applicants, schools, teachers, parents, Senior Administration);
- 2.4.1.4 track and support research projects;
- 2.4.1.5 provide a summary of applications to KPR Senior Administration prior to each scheduled meeting; and
- 2.4.1.6 report to KPR Senior Administration.

#### 2.4.2 Role of Committee members:

- 2.4.2.1 review materials/proposals in advance of meetings;
- 2.4.2.2 act as a representative of a designated group (see 2.2);
- 2.4.2.3 maintain confidentiality; and
- 2.4.2.4 declare conflict of interest.

#### 2.4.3 Role of Research Applicants:

- 2.4.3.1 maintain open communication with the Research Advisory Committee Chair to ensure safety, privacy and support for all research participants;
- 2.4.3.2 adhere to the content of these Guidelines; and
- 2.4.3.3 provide evidence of adherence to Guidelines of associated organizations (e.g. current institutional ethics approval from university or college partners, proof of affiliation with external organization).

### 2.5 Decisions on Proposals

#### 2.5.1 Five criteria are used by the Committee when reviewing proposals:

- 2.5.1.1 relevance (to public education; consistent with the Board's policies, priorities and strategic plan);
- 2.5.1.2 protection of staff and students (expectations for staff and student time; disruption to school program; degree of intrusiveness; protection from physical and mental discomfort or harm; free from sensitive or offensive items and activities; free from racist, sexist, religious or other bias; written informed consent; protection of confidentiality of participants);
- 2.5.1.3 study design (clear research questions; appropriate instruments; acceptable research procedures and statistical analysis; instructions to participants; appropriate consent in place);
- 2.5.1.4 feedback of results (process for feedback to schools, individuals and Research Advisory Committee); and
- 2.5.1.5 application meets requirements of all associated organizations (e.g. current ethical review provided from applicant's institution; current vulnerable sector screening is provided).

### 2.5.2 Decisions

Meetings will be convened with quorum and all decisions require quorum (51% of members, or half of the total Committee membership plus one). Applications will result in one of the following decisions:

- 2.5.2.1 Approval: when an application to conduct research is approved, a letter of approval is provided to the researcher and a memorandum is sent out to the applicable school Principals and Supervisory Officers with information about the study;
- 2.5.2.2 Deferral: when an application to conduct research is deferred, a letter is provided to the researcher with an explanation of the rationale. If the deferral is based on changes required to the application, the letter will outline the required amendments and the time frame for submission of the revisions; or
- 2.5.2.3 Rejection: when an application to conduct research is rejected, a letter is provided to the researcher with an explanation of the rationale.

### 2.5.3 Participation in Approved Studies

- 2.5.3.1 The decision to participate in a study that has been approved by the KPR Research Advisory Committee remains with the School Principal and/or the proposed participant(s).

2.5.4 The Research Advisory Committee or School Principal reserves the right to terminate a research study at any time.

## 3. Applications

In all cases, whether or not there is a formal application to the Committee, it is expected that there will be adherence to the principles of quality research and to the protection of individuals as outlined in these Guidelines.

### 3.1 Research that requires KPR Research Advisory Committee approval:

- 3.1.1 Research conducted by an external agency (e.g. the Addiction Research Foundation wishes to collect information from staff and students by observations and questionnaire);
- 3.1.2 Research that is intended for publication or presentation in a public forum (e.g. a teacher working in collaboration with a professional association collects information regarding student achievement at a school that is then incorporated into a published report).

- 3.2 In the event that an approved research project is not completed within the stated time frame, researchers may contact the KPR Research Advisory Committee for an extension. Researchers must contact the Chair of the KPR Research Advisory Committee outlining the circumstances and the Committee will review the extension at the next regularly scheduled meeting.

3.3 Applications to Conduct Research at KPR must include the following documents:

3.3.1 Research Proposal Application

3.3.2 Recruitment materials (including scripts for school administrators and educators)

3.3.3 Research Letter to parents/caregivers/participants

3.3.4 Consent form for parents/caregivers

3.3.5 Assent form for participants

3.3.6 Questionnaires, study instruments

3.3.7 Appropriate criminal record check including vulnerable sector check (required upon research approval)

Samples of these documents can be found in Section 6: Research Application Resources.

3.4 Research proposal applications must be submitted to the Research Advisory Committee following the timelines described below:

3.4.1 October 1, December 1, February 1, and April 1 of each school year

3.5 Only applications completed in full and submitted by the deadline will be considered.

3.6 The Research Advisory Committee may request presentations at its meetings from potential researchers in support of their applications.

#### **4. Informed Consent**

4.1 Written informed consent must be obtained from all student participants in a research study. In the case of students under the age of 18, parent/caregiver consent is required. The following supports are available to applicants to ensure procedures for active, informed consent are followed:

4.1.1 Application to Conduct Research at KPR (see Section 6: Research Application Resources); and

4.1.2 Checklist for informed consent documents (see Section 6: Research Application Resources).

4.2 Information letters to participants may be sufficient in some cases (e.g. Ministry of Education mandated data collection such as school climate surveys and student census; action research with a small group of teachers involved in a collaborative project). In this case, the following information must be clearly specified in the information letter:

4.2.1 who is conducting the research and how that person can be contacted;

4.2.2 the nature of involvement of the participants (e.g. the data collection method; the amount of time required; the setting and all other features of the research which might reasonably be expected to influence willingness to participate);

- 4.2.3 the timelines for the study;
  - 4.2.4 a clear statement indicating individuals may decline to participate or withdraw from participation without consequence;
  - 4.2.5 guarantee of individual confidentiality;
  - 4.2.6 the methods to be employed to ensure data security; and
  - 4.2.7 conditions under which the data will be made available to another person.
- 4.3 Samples of informed consent letters are available upon request (also see Section 6: Research Application Resources).

## **5. Compliance with External Policies**

All research must comply with the following external research policies:

- 5.1 The rights of the participants in the research are protected, including the privacy of personal information in accordance with the [\*\*Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act\*\*](#) and [\*\*Canada's Anti-Spam Legislation\*\*](#).
- 5.2 All research must adhere to the [\*\*Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for research involving Humans – TCPS 2 \(2022\)\*\*](#).
- 5.3 All research must align with [\*\*Ontario's Anti-Racism Data Standards\*\*](#), Ontario Anti-Racism Act, Ontario Human Rights Code, Accessibility for Ontarians with Disability Act, Policy/Program Memorandum 128: Provincial Code of Conduct and [\*\*The Human Rights-Based Approach Framework of the Ontario Human Rights Commission\*\*](#).



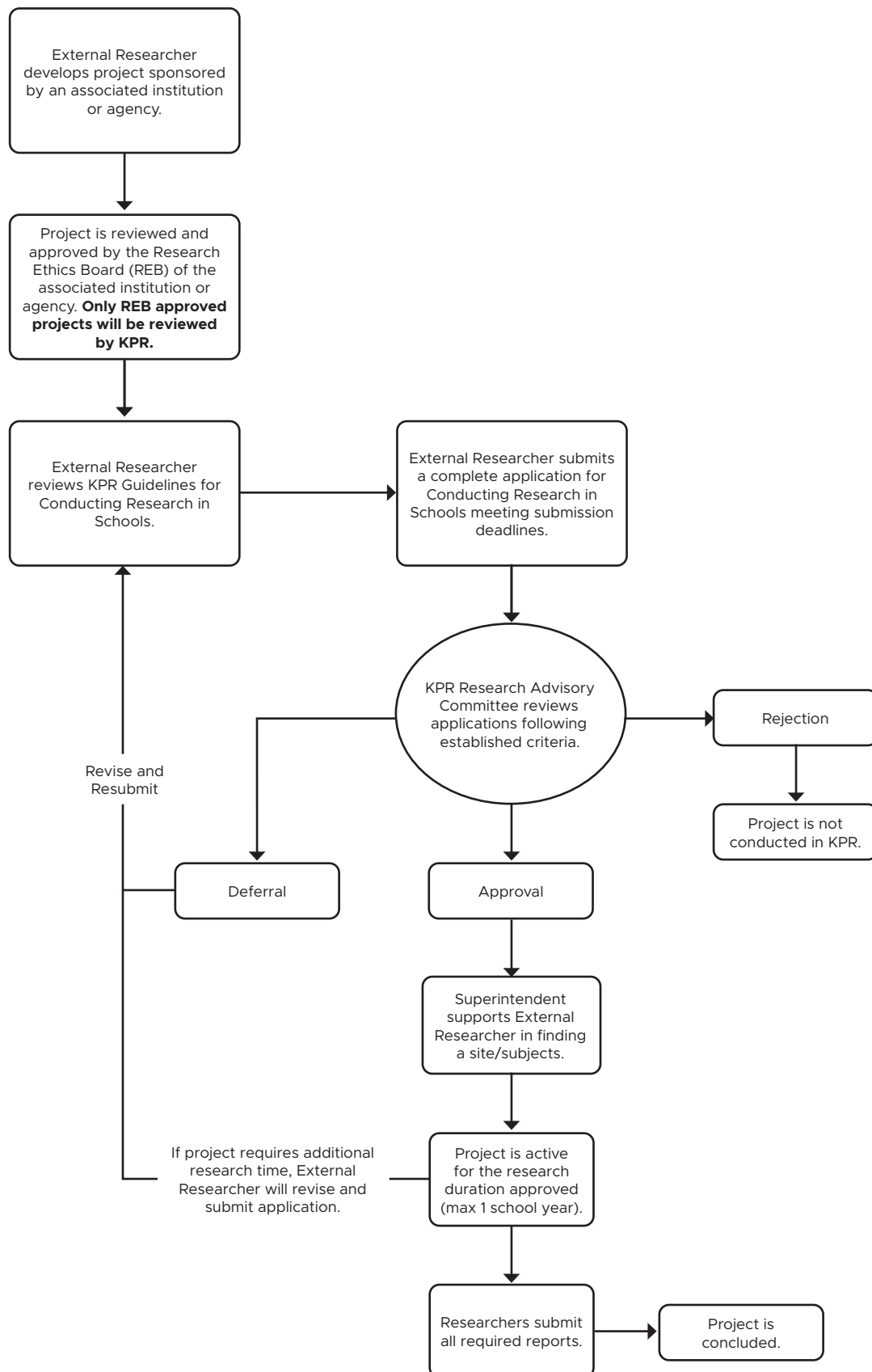
## **6: Research Application Resources**

This section contains:

- ☐ Conducting Educational Research in Schools Research Project Flowchart
- ☐ Research Application Checklist
- ☐ Application to Conduct Research at KPR
- ☐ Information Letter Guidelines
- ☐ Sample Information Letter
- ☐ Sample Consent Form
- ☐ Sample Student Assent Statement

# Conducting Educational Research in Schools

## Research Project Flowchart



## Research Application Checklist

Before submitting an application to conduct research at KPR, please confirm your application complies with the following requirements:

- » **Ethics Approval:** The proposed study has the prior ethics approval of the associated organization. A copy of the ethics approval is submitted with this application.
- » **KPR Research Application:** The KPR research application form is completed in full using this [link to a digital form](#). Applications deemed incomplete or who do not meet the submission deadline will be notified that their application will not be reviewed.
- » **Study Instruments:** Final copies of all data collection instruments are included (e.g., copies of all surveys, questionnaires, and other data collection instruments which students, staff, and/or parents/caregivers will be asked to complete).
- » **Invitation Letter:** A copy of the Invitation Letter for School Principals is included, if applicable.
- » **Active Consent:** Copies of Information Letters, Active Consent Forms and Student Assent Forms for staff, students or parents/caregivers are included with the application materials.
- » **Debriefing:** Researchers must provide a copy of their debriefing documents for all participants including parents/caregivers who provided consent.
- » **Police Clearance:** Copies of Police Vulnerable Sector Checks dated no more than 6 months prior to the KPR research application deadline, have been included for all person(s) who will be in direct contact with students as part of the research.

## Application to Conduct a Research Study in KPR

Section 1: Contact Information			
1. First Name		6. Email address	
2. Last Name		7. Phone number	
3. Street Address		8. Position/Title	
4. City		9. Institution/ Agency	
5. Postal Code			

Section 2: Ethics Approval	
All proposed studies must have Ethics Review Board approval	
10. Name of associated institution or agency that completed the Ethics Review	
11. Date of the Ethics Review Approval	
12. Upload the approved Ethics Review Board documentation	Upload File

Section 3: Research Overview	
Please attach your approved university/college/organization Ethics Review Board submission.	
13. Type of Research (Please select one)	<input type="checkbox"/> Master's Thesis <input type="checkbox"/> Doctoral Dissertation <input type="checkbox"/> Evaluation of an educational program <input type="checkbox"/> External-sponsored project
14. Title of research proposal	
15. Objectives of research	
16. Practical benefits of research and/or contribution to KPR	
17. Practical benefits of research and/or contribution to educational knowledge	

Section 3: Data Collection	
18. Student participants (provide grades, number and time required)	
19. Teacher participants (provide grades, number and time required)	
20. Other staff participants (provide grades, number and time required)	
21. Facilities required	
22. Equipment required	
23. Assistance required	
24. Other resources required	
25. Instruments (list all test, questionnaires and measures to be used and attach copies)	
26. Names of other School Boards involved in this research	
27. Particular schools preferred (with rationale)	
28. Other special arrangements, facilities or circumstances	

**Section 3: Data Collection**

29. Provision for feedback: Please describe your plans to provide feedback (for instance to participants, participating schools, to parents/ caregivers, to funding sponsors or any other group)

30. Please describe plans for publication (if applicable)

31. Facilities / equipment required

32. Other special arrangements, facilities or circumstances

**Section 4: Data Governance**

33. Please provide a brief paragraph outlining the data governance components of your project. Include details on how data will be stored, secured, accessed, retained, and eventually disposed of

**Section 5: Method of Investigation/Study**

34. Method/process

35. Information required from school records

36. Obtaining parents/caregiver consent (describe)

37. Provisions for preparing research subjects

38. Type(s) of analysis

**Section 6: Timelines**

39. Date to commence data collection

40. Date to conclude data collection

41. Expected date of report to research committee

42. Feedback for participants and/or participating schools (describe approach and expected dates)

43. Feedback for parents/caregivers (describe approach and expected dates), if applicable.

44. Feedback for educational officials and/or school system (describe approach and expected dates)

45. Describe publication plans (describe approach and expected dates)

**Section 7: Safety Requirements**

46. Criminal Background Checks

- ☐ Attached Criminal Background Checks and Vulnerable Sector Screening for researchers having direct contact with pupils
- ☐ Attached Criminal Background Checks for researchers having indirect contact with pupils
- ☐ Not applicable (as researchers will not have direct contact with pupils)

## Section 8: Consent

47. Describe how you will uphold Indigenous rights, human rights and equity and prevent discrimination and discriminatory barriers throughout all stages of the proposed research, data collection, methodology and analyses, where applicable:	
48. Declaration of Consent  <input type="checkbox"/> I affirm that I have read and understand the requirements internal and external legislations, regulations, policies and regulations. Policies and administrative regulations stated in the board guidelines.  <input type="checkbox"/> All of our organizations and representatives related to this research project will comply with the legislation, regulations, policies and guidelines. Please list the names of the representatives in the space below.  <input type="checkbox"/> I understand that compliance with these requirements is a condition of performing research-related activities involving KPR community members, and further understand that non-compliance will result in appropriate corrective action up to and including termination of the research without notice.	
49. Please provide your signature (or enter your name as an indication of your signature). This is to certify that the above-described research proposal has been vetted for its academic soundness.  I have given consideration to ethical, legal and moral questions arising from the proposal.	
50. Contact Person (e.g. sponsoring professor, director of organization)	
51. Name of Organization	
52. Please provide all supporting documentation (in a single PDF)	Upload File

## Information Letter Guidelines

Information Letters and Consent Forms must contain clear, easy-to-read, and age-appropriate language. Information letters should be concise, contain all of the necessary information, and be printed on the researcher's institution's letterhead. Consent Forms should be printed on a separate page from the Information Letter. The following information should be included in the Information Letter, as appropriate:

- The purpose of the study.
- That the project has been approved by the Research Ethics Board of the researcher's institution and the KPR Research Advisory Committee.
- What the participant will be asked to do and the types of questions that they will be asked.
- Whether participation will be individual or in a group.
- Whether participation will be during school time or outside of school hours.
- The duration of participation, including number of sessions and approximate time required.
- That participation is entirely voluntary and that individuals may refuse to answer any questions and withdraw from the study at any time without giving a reason and with no adverse consequences.
- How anonymity and/or confidentiality will be ensured.
- Access to data, how data will be used and securely stored, and how/when data will be destroyed.
- That the sharing of study results will not include any information that could identify an individual, a school, or the school board.
- The rationale for use of video/audio recording and whether or not an individual may participate in the research if they do not agree to be recorded.
- That active consent is being sought and that the Consent Form does not need to be returned should they decline participation in the research.
- The researcher's name, signature, and contact information including a telephone number for answering questions about the research.
- Contact information for the associated organization's Research Ethics Board, KPR Research Advisory Committee and KPR School Principal.

## Sample Letter

[Institution/Agency Letterhead]

Dear [Participant/Parent/Caregiver],

We are conducting a study titled “The Impact of Daily Physical Activity on Student Well-being.” The purpose of this study is to investigate the effects of daily physical activity on the overall well-being of high school students. This research aims to provide insights into how regular exercise can influence mental health, academic performance, and social interactions among adolescents.

Participants will be asked to engage in a daily physical activity program for a duration of 30 minutes over a period of 8 weeks. Data will be collected through surveys, interviews, and observations. Participants will complete a weekly survey about their physical activity, mood, and academic performance. Additionally, some participants may be selected for individual interviews to provide more in-depth insights. All data collection will be scheduled at the convenience of the participants and will not interfere with school activities.

There are no known risks associated with participating in this study. However, participants may experience mild physical discomfort due to increased physical activity.

Participants may experience improved physical fitness and well-being. The findings of this study may contribute to a better understanding of the benefits of physical activity for students and could inform future school programs and policies.

All data collected will be kept confidential and stored securely. Participants’ identities will be anonymized in all reports and publications. Only the research team will have access to the data.

Participation in this study is voluntary. Participants may withdraw from the study at any time without any consequences. If a participant chooses to withdraw, their data will be removed from the study records.

Data will be stored in a secure, password-protected database for a period of 5 years. After this period, all data will be permanently deleted.

There are no known conflicts of interest associated with this study. The results of this study will be shared with participants and their schools through a summary report. Findings may also be published in academic journals and presented at conferences.

This study has been approved by your school Principal, the KPR Research Advisory Committee and the Research Ethics Board of the University of [university name].

For any questions about the study, please contact:

Dr. Jane Doe, University of [University 1], jane.doe@university.ca, (123) 456-7890

Dr. John Smith, Institution 1, john.smith@institution.ca, (123) 456-7891



**Sample Consent Form:**

I have read and understood the information provided about the study titled “The Impact of Daily Physical Activity on Student Well-being.” I have discussed it with my student and agree to their participation.

☐ I give permission for my student to participate in this study.

☐ I give permission for my student to be audio/videotaped/photographed (if applicable).

Name of Student: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Parent/Caregiver: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Parent/Caregiver: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of participant (if 18 or older): \_\_\_\_\_

**Sample Student Assent Statement:**

I have read the information about the study titled “The Impact of Daily Physical Activity on Student Well-being” and understand what I am being asked to do. I agree to participate in this study.

Name of Student: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Student: \_\_\_\_\_