

NEW ZEALAND ASSOCIATION FOR RESEARCH IN EDUCATION

ETHICAL GUIDELINES

These guidelines are stated in the form of general principles and should be read in conjunction with the Association's Constitution, with institutional guidelines and the codes promulgated by professional regulatory bodies

1. General Principles

- 1.1 The rights and welfare of students, research participants and the public generally should take precedence over the self-interest of members of the Association or the interests of employers, colleagues or other special interest groups. In the conduct and reporting of the research there should be thoughtful concern for the rights and interests of all the individuals, groups and institutions involved and affected by it.
- 1.2 All research work should be done and reported objectively and frankly, without prejudice. Due note should be taken of limitations in techniques and the influence of particular theories and ideologies in research. Opinions unsupported by evidence should be clearly distinguished from research findings.
- 1.3 There should be in all aspects of research spirit of open enquiry and open discussion. Research findings should be expressed in a way readily understood by those with an interest in them.

2. Principals Relating to Research Participants

- 2.1 **Harmful Effects and Unintended Consequences.** Care should be taken not to disturb or cause anxiety or harm to participants and/or communities by the research procedures that are used, by the details in the research reports, or as a consequence of participating in the research.
- 2.2 **Informed consent.** Before participants are involved in a project they should be given a clear description of what the research involves, how it will be reported, and the extent of public availability. Their consent to being involved should then be sought without undue pressure or persuasion and they should have the right to withdraw at any time.
 - 2.2.1 **Hidden purposes.** If the real purpose of the study cannot for good reason be told to the participants, then special steps such as peer review should be taken to ensure they are not harmed in any way by the research procedures. Appropriate debriefing procedures should be used when the study has been completed.
 - 2.2.2 **Adverse effects.** If there are any doubts or unknowns concerning the effects of a research procedure on participants, active steps should be taken to

protect them from any kind of harm and to get the consent of all parties concerned after the possible risks have been explained to them.

2.2.3 **Children.** When children are involved in a study, informed consent should normally be obtained from their parents or others who are responsible for them, and (where age permits) from children.

2.3 **Confidentiality.** Any individual test results or other private matters should be kept strictly confidential unless express permission to publish has been given by those affected after being made aware of any possible effects of such publication.

2.4 **Time taken.** When research projects take time away from regular teaching and learning activities, care should be taken that such actions do not hinder the participant's educational progress.

2.5 **Institutional responsibilities.** Where any institution (such as a school) takes on a parental or custodial role for participants in a research exercise, all that institution's requirements and responsibilities in this matter should be openly acknowledged and respected by researchers.

3. Principles Relating to Research Personnel

3.1 **Awareness.** Everyone associated with a research exercise should be fully aware of its purposes and its methods before they become involved in it.

3.2 **Training.** No one should be involved in collecting data on complicated or sensitive research topics unless they are suitably trained or are being trained and supervised by a qualified person.

3.3 **Confidentiality.** Confidential information about research participants should not be given to other researchers without the participants' permission to do so. An exception to this would be where the kind of professional relationship between researchers clearly implies that such communication may occur.

3.4 **Research Assistants.** Research assistants should have the relevant parts of these ethical guidelines drawn to their attention especially as they relate to anonymity and respect for privacy.

4. Principals Relating to Research Reports

4.1 **Confidentiality.** Confidential information about participants, which might lead to their identification, should not be published without their permission.

4.2 **Acknowledgement.** There should be a ready acknowledgement of all forms of assistance given to a research project.

- 4.3 **Critical review.** There should be a willingness to make reports of research available for critical review.
- 4.4 **Feedback of results.** Participants and institutions involved should normally be given a report of research findings.

Revised December 1998.