

Did you know...

The *Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans* (TCPS2-2018) does not specify an age of consent for children (Article 3.3 – Application). The decision to seek consent from children instead of an authorized third party will be considered on a case-by-case basis. In practice, the researcher plays a key role, sometimes in association with the parents, in determining whether the child is able to consent. Seeking consent from children is not based on their age, but on whether they have the capacity to understand the significance of the research and the implications of the risk and benefits to themselves – as defined in the TCPS2-2018 – Section 3.C. – Decision-Making Capacity. BUREC shall review an application with a level of scrutiny appropriate to ensure that potential risks and harms for the minor participant are considered. BUREC will also consider the research topic, methodology, and the researcher’s experience to determine the capacity of the minor participant before approving an application that proposes no third-party authorization.

Factors to consider in making the decision to seek consent from children as participants include, but are not limited to, the nature of the research, the research setting, the level of risk the research may pose to participants, provincial legislation and other applicable legal and regulatory requirements related to legal age of consent, and the characteristics of the intended research participants - who may differ in many aspects including their capacity to make their own decisions.

Children who lack capacity to consent may still be able to express their wishes in a meaningful way (assent or dissent), even if such expression may not be sufficient to fulfill the requirements for consent. Researchers must respect the decision of children who are capable of verbally or physically assenting to, or dissenting from, participation in research, even if the authorized third party has consented on their behalf (see Article 3.10). Information provided to children must be comprehensible for their age and development level. Particular care must be taken to prevent real or apparent coercion, constraint or undue influence to the participant.

For more information, please see the ***BUREC Standard Operating Procedure: Seeking Consent from Minor Participants*** and the TCPS2-2018, both available at www.brandonu.ca/burec under “Policies, Standard Operating Procedures and Other Resources”.

If you are unsure if your project requires review and approval from the BUREC, we recommend completing the Ethics Exemption Inquiry Form. The BUREC Chair will make a determination on exemption and formal correspondence will be sent confirming if the project is exempt or requires approval from the Committee. The Ethics Exemption Inquiry Form, *TCPS2-2018*, and the *Brandon University Research Ethics Committee (BUREC) Policies and Procedures* can be found on the BUREC webpage at: www.brandonu.ca/burec.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact BUREC at burec@brandonu.ca.