**Letter to Parents**

*Note to Investigator: Prior to seeking assent from a subject who is a minor or who is decisionally impaired, informed consent must be sought and obtained from the potential participant’s parent or guardian. Informed consent information can be provided in any written format as long as all required elements of informed consent are included and it is written in a way that the intended audience will understand.*

*When an educator is conducting research in a P-12 classroom setting and their students are the subjects, one appropriate format for informed consent is a letter to parents/guardians. The letter should be directed to the parents/guardians and the language and phrasing should be understandable to the reader.*

* *When children are the subjects of a study use “your child” when referring to potential participants.*
* *Avoid the use of acronyms or terminology used primarily by trained educators.*

*This document provides suggested guidelines for phrasing and letter format. All required information for informed consent is included and sorted to create a five-paragraph letter. As experienced educators who have rapport with students and their families, you may wish to modify phrasing and format. This is acceptable as long as all required elements of informed consent remain present. The parent letter must also be adapted as conditions for research vary. For more information, please review the* [*Informed Consent Checklist*](https://www.eiu.edu/grants/files_irb/Informed%20Consent%20Checklist.doc) *at the* [*IRB Forms Website*](https://www.eiu.edu/grants/COMP_IRB_Forms.php)*.*

**All required elements of informed consent must be present in the letter.**

Paragraph One – Introductory Information and Purpose of the Study:

A statement that you are conducting a project in the classroom as part of the requirements of a graduate degree must be included in the parent letter. The University name and your department of study must also be included.

Example phrasing:

*Dear Parents or Guardians,*

*As part of my graduate work in Curriculum and Instruction at Eastern Illinois University, I am conducting an Action Research project in my classroom this semester. This research project is a requirement to fulfill my master’s degree coursework.*

Paragraph Two – Study Description and Potential Benefits:

Briefly state what the study is designed to assess or examine. Describe the procedures chronologically using simple language and short sentences. Use language appropriate to the population. Avoid discipline-specific terms, but if you must use them, those terms must be defined.

Specify the total length of time for participation in the study. When applicable, specify the length of time for participation for each study activity, the frequency of activities, and the location of the activities.

Describe benefits to subjects expected from the research (If the subject will not benefit directly from participation, clearly state this fact). State potential benefits, if any, to society expected from the research.

Two examples of phrasing:

1. *I will be conducting a study to determine if listening to music will improve student reading comprehension. For a period of six weeks beginning September 25th, I will play classical music each day during free reading time. I will compare weekly student reading comprehension scores from this period to scores collected before September 25. My hope is that your child’s reading comprehension will improve when classical music is played in the classroom during free reading. If so, I will be able to incorporate music into my lessons going forward.*
2. *My study will attempt to determine if COVID-19 effected learning. I will be conducting TerraNova assessments in reading and math to each student in my classroom. TerraNova is a series of student achievement tests that are designed to measure student understanding of academic subjects. Each test will take around 15 minutes to complete and will be taken during the regular school day. Each subject area will be tested separately, once a week for two weeks beginning September 25. Your child will not need to study or prepare for these assessments in any way. Once testing is complete I will compare classroom average TerraNova Scores with the average scores of previous classes of mine. If results show any areas of concern I will adapt future lessons to enable your child to succeed.*

Paragraph Three – Risk and Confidentiality:

Describe any reasonable foreseeable risks or discomforts, including physical inconveniences, psychological or social risks or harms that might result from participating in the research. Explain the likelihood of these risks occurring, and how they will be managed.

If there are circumstances that would cause you to terminate the study, describe them.

Clearly state whether or not collected data will remain confidential. When applicable, describe how confidentiality will be maintained. Include a description of who will have access to the data.

Two examples of phrasing:

1. *There is no more than minimal risk to this study. There is a small chance your child will find the music distracting during free reading and reading comprehension scores would go down. If this happens, I will immediately discontinue the study. Reading comprehension scores collected during this period will be utilized when calculating your child’s final grade, unless scores are lower during this time – those grades will not be factored in toward final grades. Reading comprehension scores collected for this project will not contain any identifying information, and my research report will only show average scores for the class as a whole. My Faculty Sponsor and I will be the only people to have access to these scores.*
2. *The results gathered from this study will be used only for the purposes of this research project. All data collected will be kept confidential and the results presented will not contain any identifying information. TerraNova scores will be stored on my password protected laptop and student names will not be associated with the scores. There is a small chance your child will feel anxious while taking the assessment. I will be reminding the children that the assessment will not affect their grades, but will help me to be a better teacher for them.*

Paragraph Four – Participation and Withdrawal:

The parent letter must clearly state that participation voluntary and not a requirement or a condition for being the recipient of benefits or services from Eastern Illinois University (it is best practice to also include the school in which the research is being conducted). In addition, it must be made clear that participants can withdraw at any time without consequences of any kind or loss of benefits or services to which they are otherwise entitled.

Two examples of phrasing:

1. *Your child’s participation in this research study is voluntary and not a requirement or condition for being the recipient of benefits or services from Eastern Illinois University or Alan Shepard School. You may also withdraw your child from this study at any time without consequences of any kind or loss of benefits or services to which you or your child are otherwise entitled.*
2. *As parents or guardians, you have the option to exclude your child from the study or withdraw your child from the study at any time. Non-Participation or withdrawal will not result in any penalty or loss of benefits or services (from Eastern Illinois University or Alan Shepard School) to which you or your child are otherwise entitled.*

Paragraph Five – Identification of Investigators, Permission to Conduct Research, Rights of Research Subjects:

Indicate who is involved in the research, including the Faculty Sponsor. State that you have been given permission by the school to conduct the study there, and that the IRB has reviewed and approved the study. Include a description of the IRB, as well as IRB contact information.

Example phrasing:

*I have been granted approval by Alan Shepard School to conduct this research project in my classroom. If you have any questions or concerns about this research, please feel free to contact me or my Faculty Sponsor:*

*PI Name*

*PI Phone Number*

*PI e-mail Address*

*Any other PI Contact Info*

*Faculty Sponsor Name*

*Faculty Sponsor Office Address*

*Eastern Illinois University*

*Faculty Sponsor Telephone Number*

*Faculty Sponsor e-mail Address*

*If you have any questions or concerns about the treatment of human participants in this study, you may call or write:*

*Institutional Review Board*

*Eastern Illinois University*

*600 Lincoln Ave.*

*Charleston, IL 61920*

*Telephone: (217) 581-2125*

*E-mail: eiuirb@eiu.edu*

*You will be given the opportunity to discuss any questions about your child’s rights as a research subject with a member of the IRB. The IRB is an independent committee composed of members of the University community, as well as lay members of the community not connected with EIU. The IRB has reviewed and approved this study.*

Closing and Signature:

Provide clear instruction to the parent or guardian regarding how they will provide consent or what to do if they do not wish for their child or ward to participate

Example phrasing:

1. *Please contact me at jdoe@sheprd.k12.us or 217-581-5000 if you do not wish for your child to participate in this project.*
2. *Please sign in the space provided below and return the letter to school with your child.*

*I hereby consent to the participation of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, a minor/subject in the investigation herein described. I understand that I am free to withdraw my consent and discontinue my child’s participation at any time.*

*\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_*

*Signature of Minor Subject’s Parent or Guardian Date*

*Thank you,*

*PI Signature*