

Templates for Consent Letters

Consent letters

When is a consent letter needed?

Action research is conducted primarily on the researcher as it is about improving skills through taking action. When actions are a part of doing one's job and do not require anything that a person would not already be doing as a part of their job, then one could argue that informed consent is not required, but it is important all people involved are aware of the effort. This means that any immediate supervisor should be aware of the plans and those involved should also know what is being done and why. Often this can be accomplished informally with co-workers. For example one might say to co-workers, I am interested in the way that social networking might improve the way we deal with this specific problem. Are you interested in exploring this with me? This way, you enlist co-action researchers to your investigations, not subjects.

However, if you are dealing with a protected group, such as children, you need to be very careful that your procedures have been approved by your academic advisor, your work supervisor, or any other body that either of these people might require. In this case, a consent or information letter to the parents is good practice. If the activity is part of your teaching and you expect all students to participate in all aspects of the activity, then an information letter, rather than a consent letter might be sent to the parents. If school-age children are being asked to give feedback on your teaching or complete a voluntary survey, you will likely need to follow research approval procedures including collecting parental consent.

Pay attention to your situation and edit these letters as appropriate for your situation. For example, an educational activity may be something that will be expected of all children in the classroom and therefore is not voluntary. So you would delete the comment about this activity being voluntary.

Templates for Action Research letters

- 1) Consent Letter Template for an action researcher in a graduate program
- 2) Consent Letter Template for an action researcher in a school
- 3) Information Letter Template

1) for a graduate student...

Date

Dear Parent/Guardian:

I am a graduate student in [name of program and university]. I am working towards a [type of degree in [field of study]]. As part of my work, I want to increase my skill and understanding of [topic of research]. Specifically, I want to understand more about [details of action research project]. My goal is to improve my skills in [anticipated project outcomes]. I expect that this will help the students in my class to be able to ...

I would like to invite your child to participate in this activity. I will [a detailed description of what you will be doing, where it will take place and who will be involved, and their role and relationship to the child].

This will involve keeping track of [detailed description of any data collected and what exactly will be done with it. Specify any risks that you see to the student, no matter how minor they might seem. For example, "students might be concerned about letting other students see their writing" and then what you will do to minimize this risk.] I will protect your child's identity and privacy by [paragraph of how you will protect the child's privacy specifically with respect to analysis and sharing of data with others in reports.]

Participation in this activity is voluntary (or is a part of normal instruction). Your child is free to refuse to be interviewed, surveyed, and observed. Your child may change his/her mind about participation in this activity at any time. Your child's standing in [activity or class] will not be influenced by agreeing or refusing to participate in any portion of this project. If you have any questions about my plans, please contact me, [name] by e-mail [email] or by phone [number]. You are also welcome to contact my professor, [name] at [contact information].

If you agree that your child is able to take part in my project, please return a signed copy of this form to me as soon as possible. You may keep the other copy for future reference. Thank you in advance for your cooperation and I hope your child enjoys [name the activity]! I am very excited about the potential of [name of project] to improve [anticipated outcome for the child].

Signature

Contact Information:

Dear Parent/Guardian of _____:

I am your child's [topic or grade level] teacher, and I want to increase my skill and understanding of [topic of action research]. Specifically, I want to understand more about [more details about the project]. My goal is to improve my ability to help your child (or the students in my class) to be able to. I would like to invite your child to participate in this activity. I will[detailed description of what you will be doing].

This will involve keeping track of [detailed description of any data collected and what exactly will be done with it. I will protect your child's privacy by [paragraph of how you will protect the child's privacy specifically with respect to analysis and sharing of data with others in discussions or reports]

(If there are risks)

The risks that I see to your child is the possibility of concern over [describe any risks you see to the student, for example, concern about sharing their ideas with others.] I will reduce this risk by [what will you do to minimize the risk, for example, work with the students to develop a respectful attitude for sharing work in progress).

(If it is part of the educational process you can skip this paragraph) Participation in this activity is voluntary. Your child is free to refuse to be interviewed, surveyed, and observed. Your child may change his/her mind about participation in this activity at any time. Your child's standing in [describe action - technology club, running team or program] will not be influenced by agreeing or refusing to participate in any portion of this project. If you have any questions about my plans, please contact me, [name] by e-mail [email] or by phone [number]. You are also welcome to contact Principal [name] at [contact information] with any questions you might have.

(See alternate paragraph below for passive consent). If you agree that your child is able to take part in my project, please return a signed copy of this form to me as soon as possible. You may keep the other copy for future reference. Thank you in advance for your cooperation, and I hope your child enjoys [name the activity]! I am very excited about the potential of [describe the anticipated outcome for students and for the teacher researcher]__

Sincerely,

Name

Contact information

Permission Slip to Accompany the above letters

I give my permission for my child _____ to participate in _____
Name Name of

_____ Date: _____
Action Research project

Parent/Guardian

Sign Name: _____

Print Name: _____

Questions or concerns about this research project can be directed to _____
[contact information]

Information Letter Template

Date

Dear Parent/student/Coworker/

This year I am working on developing my skills to

I am pleased to be working with (you/your team/your child) and hope that you will help me in the quest to learn more about.....

I expect that participation in this experience will benefit your child as well as help me improve my skills in [area you are working on]. If you have any concerns about this change, please contact me. [name and contact information].

I look forward to learning with and from you and hope that you will be willing to share your feedback with complete honesty. I will learn more if you are willing to share what you notice or think about these changes.

You can reach me at (contact information is not already known). Please feel free to ask me any questions.

Signature

Contact Information