



Catholic Education Office Ballarat: Research in Catholic Schools and Access to Data on Catholic Schools 2017

Drafted: January 2017
Ratified: February 2017

RATIONALE:

This policy provides information for individuals or organisations who are seeking:

- access to Catholic schools for the purpose of undertaking research; or
- access to data related to Catholic schools held by Catholic Education Office Ballarat.

It is expected that when researchers conduct research in Catholic schools, they do so on the basis that the findings may assist to improve student outcomes and increase school effectiveness. Research in areas beyond the immediate concerns of schools, should be conducted only when it can be demonstrated that the findings may have a potential benefit for the participants themselves.

The data held by Catholic Education Office Ballarat are collected from Catholic schools for accountability requirements of governments and for the purpose of providing leadership and support services to schools. Individuals and organisations seeking access to these data collections will need to demonstrate that release of the data will have potential benefit for students in Catholic schools.

POLICY STATEMENT:

The Catholic Education Office Ballarat welcomes research in and by schools in the diocese. The proposed research must be of high quality and contribute to the potential educational benefit of the school/s. Ethical requirements will be consistent with the provisions of the *National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research*. The impact upon and the time and effort required by students and staff as participants will be taken into consideration.

The Catholic Education Office Ballarat enables researchers access to school and/or office data to support research in education, promote innovation, support improvements in student learning outcomes and to support evidence-based decision making in the Catholic education system.

PRINCIPLES:

Capacity building

The Catholic Education Office Ballarat is a learning organisation, which values the sharing of knowledge across the education sector in order to encourage creativity, innovation and collaboration.

Adding value

Research findings and access to information should provide a potential contribution to existing knowledge and a balance between short-term and long-term benefits.

Maintaining propriety

In order to protect the welfare and rights of individuals, access to information and exchange of knowledge must conform to legal and ethical requirements. This policy reflects the obligations of researchers outlined in the *National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) documents: National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research (2007 – updated May 2013) and*

Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research (2007). The NHMRC statements can be viewed at www.nhmrc.gov.au.

PROCEDURES:

A. Seeking access to Catholic schools for the purpose of research

Catholic Education Office Ballarat Approval

All non school-based researchers, and school personnel wanting to conduct research related to their postgraduate studies, need to seek approval from Catholic Education Office Ballarat to conduct research in Catholic schools within the Diocese of Ballarat.

- Procedures for obtaining approval are outlined in [Appendix 1](#).
- Researchers need to complete an **application form** through the Catholic Education Office Ballarat

Ethics Approval

The NHMRC sets out guidelines for the review of research proposals by a Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC). Since research conducted in schools falls within the requirements of the NHMRC, approval from an Ethics Committee is normally required. *Appendix 1 – Procedures for Obtaining Approval to Conduct Research in a Catholic School* provides details about the categories of researchers required to seek the approval of an Ethics Committee.

School Approval

As collection of data can be time consuming for schools and may divert attention away from higher priority tasks, the ultimate decision to allow the research to proceed within a particular school rests fully with the principal. *Appendix 1 – Procedures for Obtaining Approval to Conduct Research in a Catholic School* provides detail about the information to be provided to schools when seeking their participation.

Attachments and link:

Appendix 1 – [Procedures for Obtaining Approval to Conduct Research in a Catholic School](#)

Appendix 2 – [Requirements for Ethics Approval of Research Proposals](#)

B. Seeking access to data related to Catholic schools held by Catholic Education Office Ballarat

Requests for access to data held by Catholic Education Office Ballarat, must be made by email and should specify what data are being sought and for what purpose.

When considering requests for access to data, Catholic Education Office Ballarat will comply with confidentiality and privacy requirements and take into account other areas of sensitivity related to Catholic schools, Catholic Education Office Ballarat, and the Catholic Education Commission of Victoria Ltd (CECV).

Generally, access to data is provided to:

- government departments and Catholic agencies for the purpose of accountability and provision of services;
- Catholic schools to assist in their planning and reporting activities;
- people engaged directly in education;
- people undertaking research in education or other areas of community benefit;
- non-profit organisations involved in activities likely to provide a benefit to schools and the wider community.

The Catholic Education Office Ballarat will **not** normally provide data to commercial or marketing organisations, including those offering educational services.

In cases where the data are already publicly available, the person making the request will be referred to that location.

If some or all of the requested data are not available, or where access is denied, the person making the request will be informed.

Data sets are provided by Catholic Education Office Ballarat with the agreement that information is utilized only for the purposes stated in the request for access.

All requests for access to data held by Catholic Education Office Ballarat must be made in writing to the Director **by email**:

Email: director@ceoballarat.catholic.edu.au

Post: Director
Catholic Education Office Ballarat
PO Box 576
BALLARAT, Vic, 3353

APPENDICES:

Appendix 1 – Procedures for Obtaining Approval to Conduct Research in a Catholic School

Appendix 2 – Requirements for Ethics Approval of Research Proposals