



Guide to Ethical Research and Innovation for Teachers and Researchers at the Campus School of Smith College

Purpose: The Campus School of Smith College has three main purposes:

1. To create a unique setting where children realize their potential, become informed and engaged citizens, and are well prepared to continue their educational journeys.
2. To advance the common good by mentoring the next generation of teachers while designing and sharing innovative practices in teaching and learning.
3. To provide a setting where Smith College students and faculty can study and conduct research on teaching, the learning process, and child development.

This guide is meant to help facilitate experimentation, research, and learning at the [Campus School of Smith College](#). The Campus School Administration, the Department of Education and Child Study, and the [Smith College Institutional Review Board \(IRB\)](#) are committed to helping teachers, students, and researchers work on improving child learning while adhering to high ethical standards and prioritizing child safety at all times.

This guide is meant to delineate which activities and projects will and will not require IRB review. It is divided into three broad categories to cover the roles of various people conducting research at the Campus School. Both the role of the person and the intent of the research are important considerations when deciding if a project requires IRB review.

Note that we use “students” to identify Smith College students and “children” to identify Campus School students.

1. **Campus School Teachers Engaged in Pedagogical Reflection, Curriculum Development, and Innovation**
 - a. Pedagogical innovation encompasses the normal work of teachers who are engaged in improving their teaching. Teachers consistently try out new materials, methods, topics, projects, readings, sequences, and more in their classrooms. Excellent teachers are continually reflecting and innovating. Campus School encourages teachers to do this systematically by adopting the role of teacher - researcher, and normally this type of innovation **does not require IRB review**. Teachers often wish to write about a particularly successful project or present their innovative activity outside of Smith. This typically involves using samples of children’s work as evidence or examples.
 - i. All identifying information (names, etc.) must be redacted prior to any presentation or publication of children’s work. No pictures of children or audio or video recordings can be presented without parental permission. Contact the Director of Curriculum Design & Innovation at the Campus

School to make sure parents have given permission for photos or recordings of their child to be used.

ii. **Examples**

1. A teacher writes article for the Connecticut River Conservancy to highlight an innovative classroom project. This article includes pictures of children and quotes with no names attached.
2. A teacher writes an article for on-line blog describing and analyzing an approach to math discussion. The article includes a photo and student work with names and identifying information redacted.

iii. **Parental Consent** - Activities that fall under this category do not require parental consent

iv. **IRB review** – IRB review is not required. The work described above is normal classroom practice and does not fit the IRB’s definition of research.

2. **Smith College Faculty and Students Conducting Classroom Research Projects or Class Practica**

a. Faculty at Smith College offer courses that teach students about education and how to be excellent teachers. Course-based practica often involve collaboration with Campus School teachers. Practica are projects designed to advance students’ understanding and skills in teaching and learning. Here students are focused on improving child learning and learning about teaching, not seeking an answer to a research question, and/or not contributing to generalizable knowledge.

b. This type of work is NOT to be published or presented outside of Smith College.

i. **Note:** All collaborators working with children are required to complete Child Safety Training prior to entering a Campus School classroom. They must also obtain permission from the Director of Curriculum Design & Innovation at the Campus School to be present in a classroom.

ii. **Examples**

1. Smith student running reading groups for 6th graders. The purpose is for the student to learn how to teach. The student teacher may ask children what they think and make written observations. Observations will not be published.
2. Smith faculty member assigns a classroom project to undergraduate students. Students design visuals for the classroom wall and ask children what they think. The results of the interviews may be used to design new classroom curriculum

or help students learn how to teach in addition to being the subject of the students' final projects for a class.

- iii. **Parental Consent** - Activities that fall under this category do not require separate parental consent in addition to the blanket consent forms signed by parents at the beginning of each school year.
- iv. **IRB review** – IRB review is not required. Please refer to the [Classroom Research Policy](#) for more information.

3. **Anyone Conducting Scholarly Research at the Campus School.** When activities involve systematic data collection outside the normal pedagogical process with the intent to present or publish outside of Smith College, this work becomes scholarly research and **requires IRB review.**

- i. For example, if a researcher designs an experiment in which they systematically manipulate the learning environment and look for differences between groups or require access to student records, that is research.
- b. This category includes independent Smith College faculty or student projects that treat children as research subjects and involve the possibility of presenting or publishing outside of Smith College.