

Guidance on Consent in relation to Child / Youth Research Participation

In circumstances where the research participant is a child / young person (under 18 years), the researcher must obtain consent from the participant's parent/ legal guardian (as distinct from next of kin) and the child / young person's assent, in line with best practice as defined by the appropriate Ethics Committee. In this regard, see Section 7.7 in the UCC Code of Research Conduct.

A researcher, who is not obtaining the consent of a parent /legal guardian, has to satisfy the appropriate ethics review committee that one or more of the following situation(s) arise:

1. The research participant is known to be in the upper age of childhood, that is, 16 years of age and over, and is thus mature enough to understand the research and to consent to it; that the research is not unduly complicated / ethically complex and that the participant is not vulnerable through immaturity (or other ways) that could warrant consent from a parent / guardian.
2. That advance / blanket / standing parental consent has been given for a participant aged over 16 years for a range of activities and it is demonstrated that the proposed research is closely related to, and not any higher risk than any of the other activities.
3. The research is of benefit to that category of young people to which the research participant belongs and that the research participant's parents may be motivated not to provide consent because of potential conflict between their rights and interests and those of their child.
4. There is reason to believe that it is contrary to the best interests, safety and / wellbeing of the child / youth research participant to seek consent from their parents for participation in the study.