

## EASHW TIPS – RESEARCH WITH MINORS

If you have not done this before, also read the following documents on our website:

- **TIPS about Ethical and Legal Consent**
- **TIPS about Anonymity and Pseudonymity**

For research with minors (younger than 18 years), there is a significant difference between anonymous and non-anonymous research. Ethical and legal consent may be required from a parent/guardian, depending on the anonymity of the study and the age of the participants.

### C7. AGE + NON-ANONYMOUS: DO YOU DEVIATE FROM THE WRITTEN CONSENT OF (1) MINORS (<18) AND (2) THEIR PARENT/GUARDIAN?

For **NON-ANONYMOUS RESEARCH with MINORS** (= minors are identifiable at some point, such as during recruitment (e.g., via email) or data collection (e.g., recording names, audio, or video):

1. **Ethical AND legal consent (GDPR legislation) must be obtained from:**
  - a. **Participants (minors), AND**
  - b. **A parent/guardian.**
2. Anyone interacting with minors or handling non-anonymous data about minors must provide a **legal certificate for working with minors** (formerly known as the certificate of good conduct, model 2).

For question 7 about **NON-ANONYMOUS RESEARCH with MINORS**, the answer options are:

- **YES to question 7** = Minor participants will be identifiable during the study, and you do **NOT** collect active written consent from both the minor and their parent/guardian.
- **NO to question 7** = Minor participants will be identifiable during the study, and you **DO** collect active written consent from both the minor and their parent/guardian.
- **NA to question 7** = Either all participants are 18 or older, OR the study is anonymous (see question 8 for anonymous research with minors).

Further explanations for the response options are provided in the next sections.

### YES TO QUESTION 7 - NON-ANONYMOUS RESEARCH WITH MINORS

You plan a non-anonymous study with minors but do **NOT collect written consent** from both the **participants and their parent/guardian**. This is only permissible in *exceptional* cases and requires careful justification and approval.

Key Reminders:

- You must obtain some form of active consent from participants and their parent/guardian.
- If obtaining consent from participants and/OR their parent/guardian is not possible, consult the Privacy Commission (privacy@uantwerpen.be).
- If the Privacy Commission changes the legal basis of your study to “Public Interest,” this must be noted in your EASHW application.

Please further address:

1. WHY can't you ask for written permission from every minor and a parent/guardian? Justify this.
  - Clearly explain why written consent is not an option.
  - Note that written consent is the standard. Oral or alternative forms of consent are only acceptable if written consent is infeasible.
2. DO you ask for ACTIVE CONSENT from the MINOR? Explain why & how (Adapted informed consent procedures tailored to the intended target group are mandatory as an attachment)
  - Explain how you will obtain consent from the minor: Attach adapted informed consent *procedures* tailored to the age and understanding of the minors.
    - For very young children, images can also be used. For inspiration, see: <https://childethics.com/>
  - If you will NOT obtain consent from the minor participants: explain why and discuss with the Privacy Committee if the study needs to be placed under "Public Interest" as a legal basis.
3. DO you ask for ACTIVE CONSENT from a PARENT/GUARDIAN? Explain why & how (Adapted informed consent procedures tailored to the intended target group are mandatory as an attachment)
  - Explain how you will obtain consent from parent/guardian: Attach adapted informed consent procedures tailored to this group.
  - If you will NOT obtain consent from the parents/guardians: explain why, and discuss with the Privacy Committee if the study needs to be placed under "Public Interest" as a legal basis.

For question 2 & 3, be further aware that

- **Active (opt-in) consent** is required for both parties. If active consent cannot be obtained, provide:
    - A justification for why active consent is not feasible, AND
    - Evidence of approval from the Privacy Commission to change the legal basis to "Public Interest."
  - Participation requires **consent from both the minor and their parent/guardian**:
    - If one party refuses, the minor cannot participate.
    - No one, including minors, can be forced to participate. Even if their parent wants them to participate, you must respect the decision of the minor as well.
    - Reflect on how you will handle group settings (e.g., in a classroom) where some minors do not or cannot participate. Ensure non-participants do not feel excluded or targeted.
    - If a minor decides to stop participation during the study, their choice must be respected immediately and without negative consequences.
4. Do you collect the NAME of every participant and their parent/guardian? (This is required by the GDPR, also when you not use written consent.)
    - Even without written consent, you must record the names of both parties. GDPR requires this to ensure accountability for collecting identity data.
  5. GDPR: IF needed, confirm that the Privacy Commission has approved the legal basis "Public Interest".
    - Consult with the Privacy Commission [privacy@uantwerpen.be](mailto:privacy@uantwerpen.be) if the research needs to be placed under "Public Interest" as a legal basis, or when in doubt.

Additional requirements:

- Anyone interacting with minors or handling identifiable data must provide a **CERTIFICATE FOR WORKING WITH MINORS** (formerly Certificate of Good Conduct, Artikel 596.2 ('minderjarigenmodel'))
- Certificates can usually be obtained online via your local municipality or police station. Attach these to your application.

## NO TO QUESTION 7 - NON-ANONYMOUS RESEARCH WITH MINORS

You plan a non-anonymous study with minors and **YOU WILL collect WRITTEN consent** from both the participants **AND their parent/guardian**.

Please address the following questions:

1. **HOW DO YOU ASK FOR ACTIVE CONSENT from the MINOR? (Adapted informed consent forms tailored to the intended target group are mandatory as an attachment)**
  - Consent is written (if not, you need to answer “YES” to this question).
  - Explain how you will obtain consent from the minor: Attach adapted informed consent forms tailored to the age and understanding of the minors.
    - For very young children, images can also be used. For inspiration, see: <https://childethics.com/>
2. **HOW do you ask for ACTIVE CONSENT from a PARENT/GUARDIAN? (Adapted informed consent forms tailored to the intended target group are mandatory as an attachment)**
  - Consent is written (if not, you need to answer “YES” to this question).
  - Explain how you will obtain consent from the parent/guardian: Attach adapted informed consent forms tailored to this group.

For question 2 & 3, be further aware that

- **Active (opt-in) consent** is required for both parties. If active consent cannot be obtained, provide:
  - A justification for why active consent is not feasible, AND
  - Explain how opt-out/passive consent will be obtained, AND
  - Evidence of approval from the Privacy Commission to change the legal basis to “Public Interest.”
- 3. **CONFIRM that minors will only participate if both (1) the minor AND (2) a parent/guardian consent.**
  - Participation requires consent from both the minor and their parent/guardian:
    - If one party refuses, the minor cannot participate.
    - No one, including minors, can be forced to participate. Even if their parent wants them to participate, you must respect the decision of the minor as well.
    - Reflect on how you will handle **group settings** (e.g., in a classroom) where some minors do not or cannot participate. Ensure non-participants do not feel excluded or targeted.
    - If a minor decides to stop participation during the study, their choice must be respected immediately and without negative consequences.

**! PLEASE NOTE: Please use our website’s informed consent forms. Keep all the content aspects but adapt the language for the target group. Unclear, missing or redundant information in the informed consent forms will result in a PRELIMINARY NEGATIVE ADVICE from EASHW.**

## C8. AGE + FULLY ANONYMOUS: DO YOU DEVIATE FROM WRITTEN CONSENT FROM (1) PARTICIPANTS UNDER THE AGE OF 13 AND (2) THEIR PARENT/GUARDIAN?

This question applies to **FULLY ANONYMOUS RESEARCH WITH MINORS**, where participants are unidentifiable at all stages of the study. According to EASHW guidelines and recommendations from the Children’s Rights Commission and the Knowledge Centre for Children’s Rights, consent requirements differ based on age:

- Minors **UNDER 13 YEARS OLD**: **Require consent** from both the participant *and* their **parent/guardian**.
- Minors **AGED 13 TO 17 YEARS** old: Can **decide independently** whether to participate in a study. Informing parents/guardians is optional but not always necessary or ideal.

#### FOR ALL ANONYMOUS STUDIES WITH MINORS:

- **Active consent (opt-in) is required for all participants**. If you do not use active consent, justify why it is not possible.
- **Written consent** is standard. If you use an alternative form, argue why written consent is not feasible.
- Use the informed consent **template for anonymous research** and tailor the language for your target population.
- Familiarize yourself with relevant support organizations, some of which are listed at the end of this document.

#### FOR MINORS UNDER 13 YEARS OLD:

- Both participant **and parent/guardian** must give **active, written consent**.
- Procedures for consent are similar to those for non-anonymous research with minors.

#### FOR MINORS AGED 13 TO 17 YEARS OLD:

- Only the participant's active consent is required.
- Informing parents/guardians is optional and may depend on the study's context.
  - For example: In an online survey about sensitive topics like teenagers' sexual preferences or social experiences, informing parents may be awkward or deter participation.

For question 8 about **FULLY ANONYMOUS RESEARCH with MINORS**, the answer options are:

- **YES to question 8** = You conduct fully anonymous research with minors but do **NOT collect active written consent** as required.
- **NO to question 8** = You conduct fully anonymous research with minors and **DO collect active written consent** as required.
- **NA to question 8** = Either all participants are 18 or older, OR the study is non-anonymous (see question 7 for non-anonymous research with minors).

Further explanations for the response options are provided in the next sections.

### YES TO QUESTION 8 - **ANONYMOUS RESEARCH WITH MINORS**

You plan an anonymous study with minors but do **NOT collect written consent** from both the **participants (and their parent/guardian for -13 year olds)**. This is only permissible in *exceptional* cases and requires careful justification and approval.

Please further address:

1. **WHY can't you ask for written permission from every minor (and a parent/guardian for -13 year olds)? Justify this.**
  - Clearly explain why written consent is not an option.

- Note that written consent is the standard. Oral or alternative forms of consent are only acceptable if written consent is infeasible.
2. DO you ask for ACTIVE CONSENT from the MINOR in other ways? Explain why & how (Adapted informed consent procedures tailored to the intended target group are mandatory as an attachment)
    - Explain how you will obtain consent from the minor: Attach adapted informed consent *procedures* tailored to the age and understanding of the minors.
      - For very young children, images can also be used. For inspiration, see: <https://childethics.com/>
    - If you will NOT obtain any consent from the minor participants: explain why and how this can be justified. *This is very exceptional!*
  3. For -13 year old participants: DO you ask for ACTIVE CONSENT from a PARENT/GUARDIAN? Explain why & how (Adapted informed consent procedures tailored to the intended target group are mandatory as an attachment)
    - Explain how you will obtain consent from parent/guardian: Attach adapted informed consent procedures tailored to this group.
    - If you will NOT obtain any consent from the parents/guardians: explain why, and how this can be justified. *This is very exceptional!*

For question 2 & 3, be further aware that

- **Active (opt-in) consent** is required for both parties. If active consent cannot be obtained, provide:
    - A justification for why active consent is not feasible, AND
    - Explain how opt-out/passive consent will be used (this is exceptional!).
4. CONFIRM that minors will only participate if both (1) the minor AND (2) a parent/guardian consent.
    - Participation requires **consent from both the minor and their parent/guardian**:
      - If one party refuses, the minor cannot participate.
      - No one, including minors, can be forced to participate. Even if their parent wants them to participate, you must respect the decision of the minor as well.
      - Reflect on how you will handle group settings (e.g., in a classroom) where some minors do not or cannot participate. Ensure non-participants do not feel excluded or targeted.
      - If a minor decides to stop participation during the study, their choice must be respected immediately and without negative consequences.

## NO TO QUESTION 8 - ANONYMOUS RESEARCH WITH MINORS

You plan a non-anonymous study with minors and **YOU WILL collect WRITTEN consent** from both the **participants AND their parent/guardian**.

Please address the following questions:

1. HOW DO YOU ASK FOR ACTIVE CONSENT from the MINOR? (Adapted informed consent forms tailored to the intended target group are mandatory as an attachment)
  - Consent is written (if not, you need to answer “YES” to this question).
  - Explain how you will obtain consent from the minor: Attach adapted informed consent forms tailored to the age and understanding of the minors.
    - For very young children, images can also be used. For inspiration, see: <https://childethics.com/>

2. HOW do you ask for ACTIVE CONSENT from a PARENT/GUARDIAN? (Adapted informed consent forms tailored to the intended target group are mandatory as an attachment)

- Consent is written (if not, you need to answer “YES” to this question).
- Explain how you will obtain consent from the parent/guardian: Attach adapted informed consent forms tailored to this group.

For question 2 & 3, be further aware that

- **Active (opt-in) consent** is required for both parties.
- **If you want to use opt-out/passive consent you need to answer YES to this question.**

3. CONFIRM that minors will only participate if both (1) the minor AND (2) a parent/guardian consent.

- Participation requires consent from both the minor and their parent/guardian:
  - If one party refuses, the minor cannot participate.
  - No one, including minors, can be forced to participate. Even if their parent wants them to participate, you must respect the decision of the minor as well.
  - Reflect on how you will handle **group settings** (e.g., in a classroom) where some minors do not or cannot participate. Ensure non-participants do not feel excluded or targeted.
  - If a minor decides to stop participation during the study, their choice must be respected immediately and without negative consequences.

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## SUPPORT FOR CHILDREN, TEENAGERS AND (YOUNG) ADULTS

Sometimes it is useful to cooperate with or refer to organizations that can assist children, teenagers and (young) adults if necessary. We list a few organizations here, but you mainly rely on your expertise as a researcher to select the most appropriate organizations for collaboration/referral.

- CLB Chat: for kids and parents <https://www.clbchat.be/>
- Awel (for children and young people) <https://www.awel.be/>
- JAC (for young people, organized by CAW): <https://www.caw.be/jac/>
- Warm William (listening ear for 0-24 year olds) <https://www.warmewilliam.be/>
- Nupraatikerover.be is a chat box for minors who have questions about or are victims of abuse, neglect or sexual violence.
- TEJO offers free therapeutic counselling for children/young people between 10-20 <https://tejo.be/>
- tZitemzo provides information and advice on children's rights in general and on Belgian juvenile law in particular to children, young people and adults <https://tzitemzo.be/>
- ClickSafe Chat: Child Focus prevention portal for safe use of the internet - <https://childfocus.be/nl-be/Online-veiligheid/Preventieportaal-online-veiligheid>
- The Flemish Government gives an overview of various aid agencies such as TeleOnthaal or the Suicide Line, see overview: <https://www.zorgenvoormorgen.be/hulplijnen>
- The Onlinehulp-Apps website screens interesting apps that can be used for well-being and mental health: <https://www.onlinehulp-apps.be/>

VISUAL – INFORMED CONSENT IN RESEARCH WITH MINOR

**PARTICIPANTS -18  
(UP TO 17 YEARS)**

**ANONYMOUS STUDY**

**NON-ANONYMOUS STUDY**

**Participants 13+**

**Participants -13**

**Informed consent from a parent/guardian required**



**You always ask for informed consent from the participant, unless this is not possible (requires a motivation in your EASHW application)**

