

THE FROEBEL TRUST - STATEMENT ON EXPECTATIONS OF ETHICAL PRACTICE IN RESEARCH (2024)

The Froebel Trust is committed to ensuring that the research it commissions and funds is aligned to its principles and that researchers are scrupulous in their attention to ethical considerations. All applicants for Froebel Trust grant funding are required to read this statement and, where applicable, to gain ethical approval for their research from their institutional research ethics committee or from the Froebel Trust.

Research ethics is integral to the Froebel Trust's research governance. The Froebel Trust's policy for research ethics is informed by the Concordat to Support Research Integrity (2013), which outlines underlying principles. When adopted by researchers, these principles can help to ensure that research is conducted to a high standard and with the wellbeing, dignity and rights of participants in mind.

The Concordat is comprised of five commitments, which are:

1. Maintaining the highest standards of rigour and integrity in all aspects of research;
2. Ensuring that research is conducted according to appropriate ethical, legal and professional frameworks, obligations and standards;
3. Supporting a research environment that is underpinned by a culture of integrity and based on good governance, best practice and support for the development of researchers;
4. Using transparent, robust and fair processes to deal with allegations of research misconduct should they arise; and
5. Working together to strengthen the integrity of research and to reviewing progress regularly and openly.

To uphold these five commitments, the Froebel Trust will:

- Ensure that all research proposals and reports are subject to a rigorous review process, involving independent scrutineers who hold senior positions as experienced researchers in the UK and / or internationally;
- Publish guidance on its website and signpost researchers to additional sources of support, including appropriate ethical, legal and professional frameworks (*see below*);
- Provide advice about networks where researchers can share their experiences and findings and offer opportunities for researchers to engage in professional learning and development;
- Share knowledge and insights with researchers and partner institutions as part of the Froebel Trust's ongoing evaluation of its own policies, systems and processes.
- Maintain systems and structures for research governance that include responsibility for monitoring ethical issues and the standards of ethical practice, including any allegations of misconduct; and
- Provide clear instructions for researchers, research participants or concerned members of the public to express confidentially any concerns about the conduct or outcomes of research that the Froebel Trust has funded and to outline how the Froebel Trust will deal with such information.

In keeping with this, **all researchers seeking grant funding from the Froebel Trust will be asked to include in their application a statement summarising what they consider are the main ethical issues arising in the proposed research and confirming that they have read this Froebel Trust Research Ethics Statement.**

In many institutions, the process for gaining ethical approval cannot start until the award of a grant has been confirmed. It can also take some months for approval to be given. Approval of grant applications will therefore be conditional on the applicant confirming that no fieldwork will commence until approval has been gained from a qualified Research Ethics Committee (REC), unless in the circumstances the Froebel Trust considers this is not appropriate. **The applicant will be asked to provide evidence to the Trust of this approval as soon as it has been gained.**

Any grant-holder without access to a REC must complete the Froebel Trust's Research Ethics Application Form. Award of the grant will be subject to scrutiny and approval by the Trust of the ethical approach proposed in the form. The form is available from the Grants Manager.

In both cases, applicants will be strongly advised to use either the BERA or EECERA guidelines in developing their own research procedures and practices or a suitable alternative guiding framework. Applicants will also be referred to the Education and Social Research Council (ESRC) Ethics Principles Resource (<http://www.ethicsguidebook.ac.uk/EthicsPrinciples>).

It is a requirement that all research reports and publications that result from work funded by the Froebel Trust will make reference to ethical considerations, explaining what these are / were and how they are / were addressed.

Good practice in research is expected of all grant-holders and is understood to involve:

1. Adherence to the five commitments of the Concordat (above) and the requirements of the contract with The Froebel Trust;
2. Clear aims, focus and rationale;
3. A strong research design and methodology, which is fit for purpose;
4. Knowledge of legal frameworks and sensitivity to general and particular ethical issues, awareness of potential risks and dangers; and mitigation plans to protect researchers, participants, academic & professional communities, the general public and the reputation of The Froebel Trust;
5. Collection and storage of research data in accordance with the requirements of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) (EU) 2016/679;
6. Treating participants with respect, ensuring their wellbeing and upholding their dignity and rights, including their rights over data and to receive feedback on the findings of the research;
7. A contribution to knowledge that is original and significant and is shared in the public domain; and
8. Careful allocation and management of budgets and resources.

Good Practice in ethics and research presentation

We have created a short presentation by Dr Kate Hoskins, a Froebel Trust Trustee and Chair of the Froebel Trust Research Sub-Committee and Dr Nikki Fairchild a member of the Froebel Trust Research Sub-Committee, considering good practice in ethics and research for anyone involved in or planning a Froebel Trust funded research project.

The presenters guide you through:

- thinking about why ethics are important
- building ethics into research design
- the ethics of working with children
- practical steps to ensuring ethical research
- completing ethics paperwork and ethical guidelines.

You can view the presentation [here](#).

Additional support

The Trust is sensitive to the possibility that the researchers funded by the Trust may occasionally need a level of support and advice unanticipated at the outset of their project and in any circumstance where this applies, researchers should contact the Trust's Grants Manager who will provide advice and assistance.

In accordance with BERA's guidelines, grant recipients are reminded to be mindful of their own (and their co-researchers') safety and wellbeing. To this end, project risk assessments and regular monitoring of researcher safety are recommended, particularly where the research will be carried out in areas where there is or has been recent conflict or a high risk of disease. The Trust expects the risk assessment and monitoring of researcher safety to be carried out by the employing institution. Independent researchers are encouraged to advise the Grants Manager about measures that will be adopted to assess and monitor their own safety and wellbeing and that of any co-researchers.

Further information

- GDPR and research: <http://www.ucl.ac.uk/research/domains/collaborative-social-science/early-career-researchers-network/consent-participate-research>
- Research guidelines for ethical practice: https://www.bera.ac.uk/researchers-resources/publications/ethical-guidelines-for-educational-research-2018?utm_source=BERA+Master+List&utm_campaign=837fd94784-+&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_66cbc2c388-837fd94784-566498013
- Research with children: ethics, safety and avoiding harm: <https://www.nspcc.org.uk/services-and-resources/impact-evidence-evaluation-child-protection/conducting-safe-and-ethical-research/>
- Concordat to Support Research: <http://www.universitiesuk.ac.uk/policy-and-analysis/reports/Documents/2012/the-concordat-to-support-research-integrity.pdf>

Queries

Grant holders should direct queries and enquiries about the ethics of their research to the Grants Manager by emailing office@froebeltrust.org.uk

Complaints

Should you have any concerns or complaints about research, which the Froebel Trust has commissioned or funded, please contact the Chair of Trustees or the Director of Education, Research and Strategy. Contact details can be found on the website www.froebel.org.uk