

Kahnawà:ke Education Center

## RESEARCH POLICY & CODE OF ETHICS

Principles, Protocols & Procedures for Conducting Education Research in  
Kahnawà:ke

KEC Research Ethics Advisory Committee  
02-22-2021



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## Glossary: Terms & Translations

**Community:** Referring to the community of Kahnawake.

**Haudenosaunee or Rotinonhsión:ni:** in Kanien'kéha means the 'People of the Longhouse'.

**Kahnawake Education Community:** Represented by the KCSC and includes the KEC and more specifically, the Education Research Advisory Committee and the Education Research Coordinator.

**Kahnawa'kehró:non:** refers to the people of Kahnawà:ke.

**Kanien'kehá:ka:** is the proper name of the people of Kahnawà:ke. It means "people of the flint", a.k.a "Mohawks".

**Meaning Making:** Kathy Absolon (2011) uses "meaning-making" instead of "data analysis" to decolonize the process of knowledge production in Onkwehón:we research. Meaning-making is a relational term that reflects the nature of decolonial research as a process of searching for knowledge, making meaning of it, and sharing with others.

**Onkwehón:we:** means the 'original or real people', referring to the peoples Indigenous to Turtle Island. This word in Kanien'kéha is often used as an alternative to "Indigenous".

**Onkwehón:we: / Indigenous Research:** meant to reflect what our community and people specifically view as 'research' and its purpose. An expression of the ways Onkwehón:we explored and transmitted ancestral knowledge. This practice of seeking out knowledge is inherent to our identity and cultural practices and not something introduced to us through colonial academic theories or systems.

**Research Partners:** KEC, research institutions, researchers, other organizations, or community members who wish to conduct research with the KEC.

**Turtle Island:** Turtle Island is drawn from the Kanien'kehá:ka Creation Story which illustrates the creation of the world when Sky Woman falls and is placed on the back of a great turtle. This term is used in different contexts, it can refer to North America, the Americas, or to all of Mother Earth. Turtle Island is also used in resistance to referring to our lands as Canada and/or the United States.

**Tsi Niionkwarihò:ten:** refers to our way of life, the reasons/matters that make us who we are.

**Wholistic:** refers to the importance of recognizing and committing to maintain balance between the spiritual, mental, physical and emotional aspects of all beings and Creation. In this case, it is a term for how researchers can participate in research partnerships willing to respect and nurture every relationship in the research, and in this way ensure health and wellness of all partners, participants and community.

# THE KAHNAWÀ:KE EDUCATION CENTER RESEARCH POLICY AND CODE OF ETHICS

## Introduction

This document outlines the Kahnawà:ke Education Center's (KEC) research policy and code of ethics concerning all research partnerships and activities. This policy explains the principles, protocols and procedures for conducting education research in partnership with the KEC. The contents provide a clear and concise guide for the development of respectful and ethical community-based research that benefits all parties interested in engaging in educational research in Kahnawà:ke. The policy includes instructions on how to prepare and complete the research request and ethics application process through the KEC's Education Research Committee.

### *Background*

The education system in Kahnawà:ke has evolved and flourished through the dedication and perseverance of parents and community members. The first schools created in Kahnawà:ke were religious mission and Indian Day Schools funded and operated by the federal government and Christian authorities. Children from Kahnawà:ke were also sent away to Indian Residential Schools. As a community, achieving educational sovereignty was a long and arduous process that formally started to take root in 1968 with the Joint Unification Agreement which combined Protestant and Catholic parents committees into one united education governance body: the Kahnawake Combined Schools Committee, to oversee Kahnawake education.. For more than fifty years, Kahnawa'kehró:non have been dedicated and driven to reclaim leadership of education for our children which includes substantial culture and language revitalization initiatives. Our educational values and principles are grounded in Haudenosaunee worldview and philosophy, embodying Tsi Niionkwarihò:ten (Our ways) which honors our ancestral knowledge and language (Stacey, 2016).By drawing on our children and families as a source of strength in our community, we have constructed a vision of education in Kahnawà:ke that is *for us by us* and continues to sustain and foster our educational goals today. Our guiding vision of education is as follows:

*“Nurtured by a strong, healthy network of family and community all of our students are empowered and proud Onkwehón:we, academically successful and well prepared to thrive in any life-path they choose.”*

Presently, the Kahnawà:ke Education Center (KEC) serves the Kanien'kehá:ka (Mohawks) of Kahnawà:ke. The KEC is responsible for the administration of three community schools, which includes Karonhianónhnha Tsi Ionterihwaienstáhkhwá, Kateri School, and Kahnawà:ke Survival School, as well as operating post-secondary programming and providing other educational services to the community. The KEC employs over 250 individuals, the majority of whom are Kahnawa'kehró:non. The KEC is governed by the Kahnawà:ke Combined School Committee (KCSC) which is composed of volunteer parents, grandparents, and other community

representatives, each of whom are appointed and/or elected through community participatory processes.

### *Motivation*

Through the decades, our community vision for education has evolved to include research funding, partnerships, and collaborations with educators, researchers, organizations, and academic institutions. Initially, the majority of the researchers working in Kahnawà:ke were not from the community and most were not Onkwehón:we. In recent years, an increasing number of Onkwehón:we students and Kahnawa'kehrón:non have completed vocational and post-secondary programs and have become community role models, leaders, educators, professionals, and researchers themselves. The **KEC Research Policy and Code of Ethics** is a response to the growing need for research in the field of education that serves the strategic goals of the KEC, our students, staff, parents, and the community-at-large.

Our collective mission as staff, administrators, educators, and community members is to ensure that teaching, learning, and research activities support our educational goals for our current students and future generations. These strategic goals are outlined within the KEC Strategic Plan and are established to guide all educational teams and departments to determine objectives and identify tasks to continuously move our vision forward. Among other actions the strategic plan also steers decisions regarding educational projects, professional development and partnerships within the KEC. Education research should therefore seek to contribute to the most current strategic goals of the KEC. To reach these goals, research related activities involving the Kahnawà:ke education system must also be led and conducted by the principle *for us by us*.

As leaders in community education, the KEC has a responsibility to the community to foster and develop research capacity within our people and to ensure that any education research in our community is conducted ethically and responsibly. The KEC recognizes that research is a powerful tool to generate and transmit new understandings and interpretations of knowledge. It is also recognized that research has always been part of our ways of knowing, passing on expertise and drawing upon the intellectual knowledge of our ancestors as we understood our ecological environment, food systems, and pathways to resiliency. Through this policy, we are fully harnessing the transformational power of education and education research to empower our people and help drive our community towards a brighter and more prosperous future.

### *Purpose*

The purpose of the KEC Research Policy and Code of Ethics is to provide guidance and leadership in conducting ethically responsible research within KEC schools or departments and any research activities that may directly or indirectly impact our students, staff, or community members and to prevent unauthorized research. KEC staff who wish to engage in education research as primary or co-investigators or collaborators in research partnerships and training (ex. work study, stage, and internships) should also follow this policy and outlined protocols. Furthermore, this policy assists the KEC and its research partners to further the community's educational vision and strategic goals, to build research capacity within the community, and

create new educational opportunities for our children and future generations of the Kanien'kehá:ka of Kahnawà:ke.

## Reclaiming Education Research

Onkwehón:we research is one of many decolonizing tools that we are using within the education system of Kahnawà:ke to counter harmful colonial research practices as well as to reclaim and reassert our ancestral ways of knowing. Education research must support Kanien'kehá:ka self-determination through the continuance and revitalization of our language, culture and knowledge systems.<sup>1</sup> As a means towards decolonization and Indigenous resurgence, it is important to acknowledge that as Onkwehón:we peoples, we are deeply connected to our communities, lands and the natural world that inform our ways of knowing and being. In Kahnawà:ke, we aim to continue drawing upon the knowledge of our ancestors as we look towards our current and future generations. How we approach and conduct research is thus informed by our beliefs as Haudenosaunee people.

*Ohén:ton Karihwatéhkwen* “the words that come before all else”, the Thanksgiving Address, is one example of our core teachings that we draw upon to root ourselves while doing research. It reminds us of our responsibilities as human beings who must maintain our kindred relationships with the natural world: the people, our Mother Earth, the waters, the fish life, the plants, the food plants, the medicines, the insects, animals, the trees, the birds, the Four Winds, our Grandfather Thunderers, Elder Brother Sun, Grandmother Moon, the stars, and the Creator. It is in our way that giving thanks brings our minds as one, as we live in balance and harmony with each other and all living things. It allows us to act with the strength of Ka'nikonhri:io, *a good mind*, so we can go forward in a good way.

Education research according to our ways is meant to honor the work of our ancestors, and to ensure that our children always have confidence in our culture, language and spirituality to grow in balance. We think Seven Generations ahead, and we are reminded of our individual responsibility to be well so we can contribute to our collective well-being as Haudenosaunee and Kanien'kehá:ka. Education research then places our minds and actions in relation to our ancestors, our present generations and our future generations - *a:se tahatikonhsontóntie (the faces yet to come)*.

When we think of education research *for us and by us*, we assert our educational sovereignty and define pathways forward in ways that align with who we are as Onkwehón:we. We recognize our capacity to seek out new directions and to strengthen our educational trajectories that oppose settler colonialism so that our ways can continue to root our relationships in harmony and equality. We recognize the possibility of collaborating on education research *for us by us* with Kahnawà:ke researchers as well as with outsider researchers who seek to decolonize

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<sup>1</sup> For more information on language reclamation work in Kahnawà:ke, visit [www.skatneenionkwaioten.org](http://www.skatneenionkwaioten.org).

research thinking and learning, and develop new relationships that are respectful of Indigenous Lands and peoples.

## **KEC and KCSC Authority**

The authority of the KEC and the Kahnawà:ke Combined Schools Committee (KCSC) in matters related to education and research is recognized and respected. The KEC and Director of Education have the right to conduct research, approve the focus of the research as well as oversee the publication and dissemination of research outcomes. The KCSC as the governing body of education in Kahnawà:ke is representative of the parents and families it serves in the community. The content of this policy, procedures, review process, or conduct of any parties involved in research activities may not in any way contravene the authority or directives of the KEC, the Director of Education, or KCSC as specified in legislation documents<sup>2</sup>

### **Research Principles**

*Education research must respect the rights and dignity of the people of Kahnawà:ke and the community members directly involved in the research. In examining research partnerships and activities, the KEC Education Research Committee and all parties involved in research shall be guided by the following principles.*

#### *Community Empowerment*

- The self-determination of the Kanien'kehá:ka of Kahnawá:ke to make decisions about research and to exercise full rights as leaders in community research partnerships is recognized and respected by all research parties.
- Education research must support the empowerment of Kahnawa'kehró:non by encouraging the reclamation of Onkwehón:we knowledge and language, promoting wellness, and self-esteem.
- Education research must uphold the KEC's mandate to support the community of Kahnawà:ke in attaining our educational vision.
- Education research must provide opportunities for the involvement of community researchers and utilize community resources provided that these are available and accessible.
- All partners (researchers, research institutions, and the KEC) must be involved in making decisions and collectively sharing knowledge about education research, including the publication and dissemination of research outcomes.

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<sup>2</sup> You can access legislation documents on the KEC website  
<https://www.kecedu.ca/kahnaw-ke-combined-schools-committee/kcsc-legislation-documents>



## *Respect*

- The Kanien'kehá:ka as a people, their language, worldview, land, waters, territories and philosophy must be respected.
- Research must be respectfully aligned with Kanien'kehá:ka values by recognizing and upholding the strengths, knowledge, experiences, and culture of Kahnawà:ke.
- Researchers must initiate a research relationship with sufficient time to follow all aspects of this research policy and code of ethics.

## *Consent and Confidentiality*

- Consent to do any research with the KEC requires following all aspects of this research policy.
- Approved research collaborations mean that the researchers and ERC Committee members consent on a research project that is reflective of the terms outlined herein and the strategic plan of the KEC.
- Throughout the entire research, active, free, prior and informed consent must be obtained and renewed from all participants as directed by the KEC Education Research Committee.
- Research will guarantee confidentiality and anonymity of individuals, organizations, and communities unless these parties choose to be named when the results are reported.
- Parents' and guardians' active, free prior and informed consent must be obtained **prior to any inclusion of children and youth in research activities.**
- Our children and students must *always* be ensured confidentiality as a protective measure and as the responsibility of the KEC.

## **Roles & Shared Responsibilities in Research Partnerships**

*The Haudenosaunee way of life is often understood as a series of roles and responsibilities on individual and collective levels. Understanding and upholding our responsibilities to one another ensures respect in our interactions and harmony in our relationships. This section outlines the various roles and shared responsibilities in research partnerships for all prospective parties: the KEC, research institutions, and researchers.*

### **Education Research Coordinator**

The Education Research Coordinator and the Education Research Committee represent the KEC and its stakeholders in research partnerships. The Education Research Coordinator is a staff member of the KEC responsible for overseeing the research ethics application, review process and implementation of this research policy. The Coordinator is also the main liaison between the Director of Education, KEC administration and research partners/collaborators who may include KEC staff wishing to conduct education research and/or training.

## Education Research Committee

The Education Research Committee (ERC) is made up of KEC staff members, KCSC board members, a KSDPP representative and community members, chaired by the Coordinator. The main duty of the ERC is to review research requests and ethics applications to ensure that research activities align with the KEC's strategic plan and the KEC's Research Policy and Code of Ethics and that all education research and training is conducted in a fair and equitable manner. The KCSC must have one representative on the Committee at all times.

### *Supporting Local Researchers*

The Education Research Coordinator and Committee will accept requests from Kahnawa'kehró:non researchers who do not necessarily wish to partner directly with the KEC but require community oversight, general input or support for their research. This aligns with the KEC's goals to support local students and researchers in building research capacity in Kahnawà:ke.

### *Oversight*

Oversight of research training, work study or similar programs within the KEC may be subject to this policy as the definition of "research activities" is broad. KEC staff wishing to collaborate with teachers, professionals or any personnel external to the KEC either to share or collect information, and/or directly work with staff, students, or community members must contact the Education Research Coordinator to clarify if a research request and ethics application is required. The purpose of this is to safeguard information, limit access to KEC staff and students, and ensure the ethical conduct of all parties involved in programming throughout the KEC. The Education Research Coordinator, and the Director of the KEC will be responsible to review such collaborations and advise of any required actions based on the nature of the project.

### *Researchers affiliated with KSDPP*

Research projects that are under the oversight and guidance of KSDPP (health and diabetes related) will continue to be supported at the KEC. The Education Research Coordinator will be the main liaison between the Research Ethics Committee, KSDPP research team/Community Advisory Board, and the researcher(s).

### *Research Project Sub-Committees*

Research project sub-committees are formed after the Education Research Committee fully approves a research project. Sub-committees are composed of permanent members and rotating members who might join depending on the nature of a specific project. When there is a meeting to discuss the research project, these members attend to ensure that the research is progressing respectfully and purposefully. As a key responsibility, the Education Research Coordinator is considered a member of every research project sub-committee. Because of our collaboration and shared processes with KSDPP, their Community Advisory Board may act as Project Sub-Committee for those projects that represent dual interests (Research with the KEC and KSDPP). The Education Research Coordinator must be a present and acting member of the KSDPP Community Advisory Board when discussing these dual interest projects.

## Responsibilities of the KEC

*In order for the KEC to uphold their role as leaders in education in Kahnawà:ke, responsibilities to research partners including community members, KEC staff, research institutions, and researchers must be fulfilled as outlined below.*

### *Community*

- Always prioritize the well-being of Kahnawa'kehró:non, particularly of our youth and children.
- Always prioritize education research that directly responds to and builds from the KEC strategic goals and aims.
- Protect the community from un-authorized or harmful research practices.
- Ensure that Kahnawa'kehró:non are informed, included, and aware of both the benefits and potential harms of education research to the community.
- Ensure that Kahnawa'kehró:non have access to information concerning education research activities, including access to the Education Research Coordinator and Education Research Committee to discuss questions and address concerns.
- Ensure community ownership and safeguarding of data during and after the completion of the research components with the KEC.
- Be involved in knowledge translation with other communities and organizations at the local, national and international levels.

### *Oversight*

- Recognize and respect the academic researchers' obligation for contributing knowledge in their discipline and to meet the research requirements of their academic institution without compromising the well-being of Kahnawà:ke.
- Ensure that all researchers, including any staff, research partners, volunteers, or community members, are held accountable to conduct ethically responsible education research or training.
- Determine the level of engagement of the KEC in the research depending on the researcher's relationship to Kahnawà:ke and the KEC, the nature of the research, the risk assessment, and research timeline
- Provide ongoing recommendations concerning the research, particularly at key phases of the process such as approving the project proposal, renewing consent during the data collection and meaning-making phases, writing, and dissemination of results.
- Facilitate any contact between the researcher(s) and KEC students and/or staff (when approved by the Coordinator & Committee) to ensure the integrity of the research and safety of everyone involved.

## Responsibilities of Research Institutions

*By partnering with the KEC, research institutions must ensure institutional and researcher accountability is maintained throughout the research process. Research institutions must ensure that the researchers affiliated with them have the structural support to fulfill their responsibilities and always place the well-being of Kahnawà:ke as a first priority.*

### Community

- Ensure that the community's needs are prioritized and that all research is carried out with maximum benefit and minimal risk to the community, per the KEC's ethics process.
- Ensure that meaningful community capacity-building is a foundational principle of research partnerships and considered in all aspects of the research process.
- Ensure that non-Indigenous research collaborators are well prepared to conduct research involving Indigenous peoples and communities by offering research and education courses designed to explore the complex process of decolonization.
- Work in partnership with Indigenous communities towards developing courses that are relevant to and supportive of Indigenous students' engagement in decolonizing research
- Mentor, train and support Indigenous students in their community work and community centered approaches to scholarship.

### Accountability

- Be committed to a relationship of respect and accountability with Kahnawà:ke, and to reflect this commitment by being in communication with the KEC, be actively involved in sustaining the relationship, and checking that researchers from the institution are themselves accountable.
- Be aware of the institutions' relationship with Kanien'kehá:ka people and of Haudenosaunee culture and values such that processes of accountability can be developed and reinforced when research is conceptualized and conducted within our communities.
- Have a critical and wholistic understanding of the relationship that Onkwehón:we peoples have to the Lands, waterways and natural world, and to educate themselves on Land protocols that must be respected and upheld within Turtle Island and beyond.
- Have a critical and wholistic historical understanding of settler colonialism and the contemporary implications of this structure in research contexts so that academic institutions can be accountable to decolonizing processes
- Anticipate timelines for grant applications such that a meaningful and reciprocal process can be entertained with the KEC.

## Responsibilities of Researchers

*Researchers must be adequately prepared to develop and sustain community research partnerships through critical preparation, by understanding community needs and dynamics, respecting and maintaining accountability in the research process and relationship. Researchers from Kahnawà:ke must be prepared to navigate this new role and adapt to the ways research*

*may change their existing relationships with community members, and create new responsibilities to uphold to the community. Throughout the research process, consideration must be given to the language, terminology, and general accessibility of information that is provided for community consumption.*

### *Critical preparation*

- Know one's identity and position in relation to Haudenosaunee and Kanien'kehá:ka people, especially to the community of Kahnawà:ke.
- Develop or deepen cultural awareness of the community, as well as the relevant protocols.
- Develop a deep understanding and critical analysis of the ongoing impacts of colonization towards Rotinonshión:ni, specifically with Kahnawake from a historical and contemporary context.
- Oppose colonial research practices and support community-centered, decolonial approaches and/or Indigenous research paradigms when appropriate.
- Understand that good intentions are insufficient, particularly in Indigenous communities wherein research and colonial educational practices have resulted in various harms to the people.

### *Community*

- Be flexible to adapt the research to meet the educational needs of Kahnawà:ke.
- Support research processes that aim to impact Kahnawà:ke in a positive way.
- Ensure that Kahnawa'kehró:non have opportunities to participate in all aspects of the research process.
- Respond to community requests for information at any time, including during and after the research project ends.
- Ensure that community members understand that their participation in the research is voluntary and that they can refuse to participate in the research and still be entitled to benefit from KEC services and KEC related activities.
- Respect that KEC staff have the right to decline to participate in any research activities with requirements that go above and beyond their employment duties.

### *Accountability*

- Continuously engage in conscious and critical thinking of how to uphold a research relationship that prevents harm in every way possible.
- Collaborate with the community in the research design, implementation, data collection, data analysis, interpretation and the dissemination of results by respecting the research protocols put forth.
- Promote creation and dissemination of knowledge within the community, through written publications, and oral presentations that are communicated in plain language. This

includes the documentation of the undertaking of the project, and publishing results on the KEC website and elsewhere for community access.

## **Procedures to Conduct Ethically Responsible Education Research**

*Herein details protocols and procedures for researchers including: Preparing a research request and ethics application to the KEC Education Research Committee, navigating the ethics review process, and maintaining accountability to the community throughout and after completion of a research project with the KEC.*

### **Preparing a Research Request & Ethics Application**

We recommend that researchers intending to submit an application to the KEC Education Research Committee must familiarize themselves with this policy and code of ethics and prepare/submit applications *well in advance of external deadlines*.

#### *KEC Research Priority*

For the purposes of this policy and code of ethics, we categorize researchers into two priority groups: **Kahnawa'kehró:non researchers (people from Kahnawà:ke)** and **any other researchers who are not from Kahnawà:ke**. Community members have unique knowledge gained through shared identity and lived experience, and awareness of the social, political, and cultural values and protocols of the community. Researchers from Kahnawà:ke will have a network of established familial and communal relationships to support their research. Furthermore, Kahnawa'kehró:non researchers also have a greater sense of responsibility and accountability to the community which will continue long after their research project has concluded.

The Kahnawà:ke Education Center appreciates ideas to collaborate on research, especially when these ideas are grounded within Kanien'kehá:ka worldview and further our strategic goals. The KEC is committed to approving and overseeing research with minimal risk to our community, as well as research that can build community capacity. We will scrutinize research collaborations that are considered high risk, and/or pertain to sensitive or trauma related topics (e.g. "Indian Day School"), and the researcher's background and relationships in Kahnawà:ke or other Indigenous communities will hold weight. Therefore, research requests/applications are assessed and responded to according to the KEC's research priorities, existing relationships and the existing cultural awareness of researchers.

### **Researchers**

*Individuals including graduate students, community members, KEC staff and/or organizations that wish to conduct research involving the KEC must have a project **idea** meant to contribute to the self-determination of the Kanien'kehá:ka and our community vision of education, toward the protection and fulfillment of our responsibilities to future generations.*

#### *Academic Researchers*

Academic researchers can be from Kahnawà:ke or come from outside our community. Outsider researchers include Onkwehon:we from other communities, as well as non-Indigenous

researchers. Academic researchers must be affiliated with a post-secondary institution (CEGEP, college, or university) or an organization that can reinforce researcher accountability and provide additional support and oversight throughout the research process.

#### *Non-Academic Researchers*

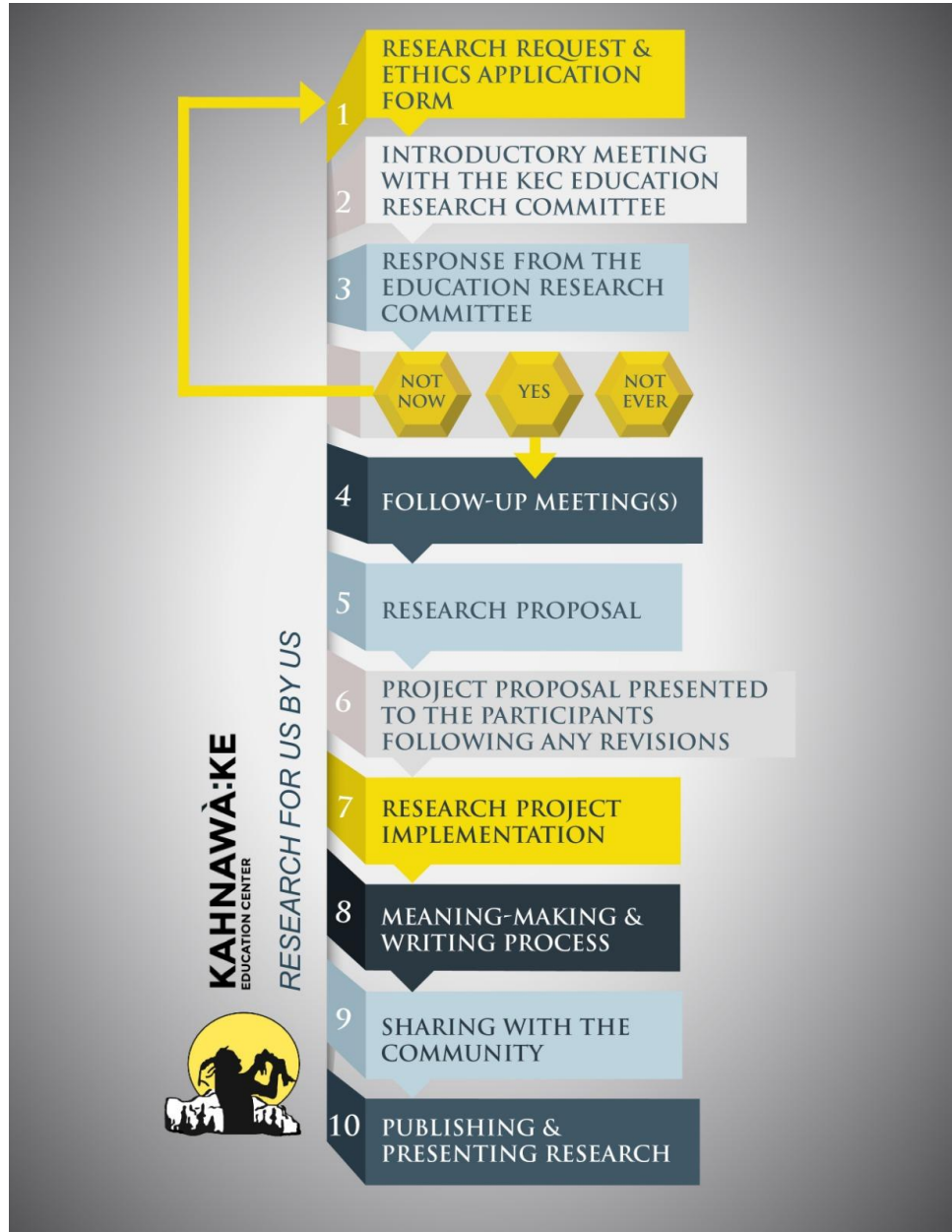
Non academic researchers (meaning those who are not affiliated with a university or organization) *from Kahnawà:ke* are welcome to submit applications for review. Our inclusion of non-academic Kahnawa'kehrón:non researchers challenges Western conceptions about what research is, who is considered a researcher, and recognizes knowledge drawn from lived experience. This is a form of self-determination that supports healing from the legacies of Indian Day Schools and Residential Schools by building capacity in our own people.

#### *Consent, Trust & Consensus*

An invitation to collaborate on research with the KEC means that consent has been given and the involved parties have agreed on roles and responsibilities to share. Every effort will be made for all parties involved to reach a consensus on decisions concerning research, the aim being to ensure the well-being of present and future generations. Consensus can sometimes mean recognizing differences of opinion but agreeing to move forward with a clear understanding that researchers will always be accountable. Open communication between all parties is essential to establishing and maintaining trust throughout the research relationship.

## Research Request & Ethics Application Process

*This section of the policy outlines each step from submission to completion, and sharing outcomes of research. Responses to research applications vary depending on active research projects at the time of a research submission.*





### *1. Research Request & Ethics Application Form*

All researchers must complete and submit the Research Request & Ethics Application form, including funding/grant applications for possible research involving the KEC. The application form must be completed, signed and submitted to the Education Research Coordinator. The Education Research Coordinator will screen applications and assist potential researchers in preparing for their introductory meeting with the Education Research Committee.

#### *KEC letters of support for funding/grant applications*

If the researcher intends to apply for funding, the application should be submitted well in advance of grant deadlines to allow adequate time for consideration. Information on the grant agency and timeline should be provided in the application. If the researcher requires a letter of support from the KEC, it should be noted on the application. Initial requests of this type may or may not require an introductory meeting with the Education Research Committee before conditional approval depending on the nature and scope of the project. As a result, some applications of this nature will require an introductory meeting *before* a letter of support is granted while others will be provided with a letter and the next steps in the process outlined here will proceed when the researcher receives a response from the funding/grant agency.

### *2. Introductory meeting with the KEC Education Research Committee*

The aim of this meeting is to get to know the research applicant based on the information shared in the initial research form. At this meeting, questions involving the researcher's background, experience in education, interest and connections to Kahnawà:ké may be discussed. The researcher should prepare to present something to the committee that is reflective of her/his style of inquiry and understanding of research collaboration with Indigenous people. The researcher will also have an opportunity to ask questions.

#### *Evaluating the feasibility of research requests*

Research projects require different resources and are based on a variety of timeframes. While the KEC is open and excited for potential research partnerships, inviting a research collaboration requires vouching for and supporting the researcher(s). When the KEC assesses a research idea, the time and resources required and the potential level of involvement of the KEC Education Research committee and other participants plays a central role in determining if the project can be entertained, or not.

#### *Determining the level of engagement*

At the first meeting, it will be important to discuss the research relationship. For some projects, the education research committee might want to be more hands-on than for others. This might depend on various factors, including your background and relationship with the community, time/resources, and the nature of the project. Determining the level of engagement can serve as a general guideline for how to work together, and continuous communication and flexibility will be imperative).

#### *Discussing the researcher's initial idea*

If the initial idea proposed involves the participation of many outsider researchers, it is imperative that these members also attend this meeting and each submit a Research Request &

Ethics Application form. It is the responsibility of the lead researcher to ensure that all members of the team are acquainted with Indigenous methodologies, Indigenous studies and decolonizing theories as well as the KEC's Code of Ethics & Research Policy.

At this meeting, we will participate in a discussion of your initial project idea. 'Initial idea' is key at this stage of the research, as it points to the crucial role of sharing and listening, and of being flexible to adapt or transform an initial idea into one that might best support the KEC mission and current strategic goals.

#### *Approving, modifying, or proposing an alternate project idea*

*If the idea is approved:* it means that your initial idea is accepted by the committee. The research committee may suggest beginning a research proposal right away.

*If the idea is modified:* it means that your initial idea is in line with one or more of the KEC's strategic goals but might need slight considerations that reflect internal knowledge (knowledge that researcher might not have). These adjustments, however small, are important to discuss and consider before moving on to the project proposal.

*If the education research committee proposes an alternative project:* it likely means that as a researcher, you demonstrated that you have the knowledge and experience necessary to carry out community work. However, your initial idea might not be in line with the strategic goals, or simply not timely. The education research committee might propose another project idea based on your background as a researcher that might be beneficial for the education community and of interest to you.

### *3. Response from the Education Research Committee*

The Education Research Coordinator will contact the researcher by email after the introductory meeting with three possible responses:

- **Yes:** This response means that the Education Research Committee is willing to move your request forward to the research proposal stage. The committee and the researcher are in consensus with the project idea. At a follow-up meeting, the details of the research proposal will be clarified. A letter confirming a research partnership for university ethics applications will be provided upon request.
- **Not now:** This response means that the project idea could be of interest to the KEC, but the timing might not be right. For example, the education research board might be saturated with research requests and some ideas might be more in line with the needs of the Kahnawà:ke education community. As well, Kahnawa'kehrón:non researchers will have priority, which means that if too many requests are submitted for the education research board to accommodate, your request might be rejected temporarily. The project idea that you propose might also be too ambitious and require many resources and time; these factors may also influence the decision process.
- **Not ever:** This response means that for serious reasons, the education research board is reluctant to engage in research collaborations with the researcher(s). The reason might be tied to the research idea or the researcher's background (i.e. intentions, previous work,

understanding of decolonization). Not every response considers potential serious harm to community members, or the community as a whole.

#### *4. Follow-up meeting(s)*

The Education Research Coordinator will facilitate any future follow-up meetings which may be virtual or in-person meetings and may or may not include Education Research Committee members or KEC staff members. The first follow-up meeting(s) after introductions will address a number of crucial aspects of the research project as outlined in the following subsections.

#### *5. Research proposal*

After the initial meeting, there is a period spent on developing a project proposal. The researcher(s) has the responsibility of developing a project proposal that starts with a consideration of the research idea approved by the committee, the objectives of the research, research methods, research outcomes, and community impact. A template for the research proposal will be provided by the coordinator. If necessary, the coordinator will provide background information (e.g. links and resources) to aid the researcher in preparing the proposal.

The project proposal is ‘finalized’ when consensus is reached, and the proposal is approved by the coordinator and committee. At this stage, the coordinator will ensure that the terms of the relationship are reaffirmed with the researcher(s) before beginning the project.

#### *6. Project proposal presented to the participants following any revisions*

After revising the proposal based on the coordinator and committee’s suggestions, the proposal must also be shared with the community members (including KEC staff or parents if students are involved) that are intended participants in the research (if any).

In this phase, the coordinator will help facilitate communication between the researcher and community participants via the most appropriate method (based on the nature of the research project), through email, a virtual meeting, in-person meeting or combination of methods. This provides community members with an opportunity to ask questions and propose changes that the researcher considers and implements. This meeting should also serve to build community capacity into the research, and to indicate whether community members’ participation will be remunerated, and how. Finally, community members have the right to refuse participation and may exercise that right from this point forward in the research process.

#### *7. Research project implementation*

After the proposal has been altered in consideration of the coordinator, committee, and research participants, it is time to begin implementing the project. The fieldwork unfolds as it is stipulated in the project proposal. At this stage, meetings with the research sub-committee and/or ERC are held when needed. The researcher should at all stages of this fieldwork phase ensure the wellness of the participants and of the community. Renewing consent based on how the fieldwork unfolds is therefore imperative.

### *8. Meaning-making & writing process*

Instead of data analysis, we choose the terminology “meaning-making” (Absolon, 2011), because it reflects the responsibility that is held and shared within every stage of the research cycle. Meaning-making is a collective reminder of the ‘stake’ that every involved person has in the research, and of how research activities and outcomes impact the community of Kahnawà:ké as a whole.

The terms of this meaning-making phase (e.g. who is involved in the writing, whether the involvement is active or passive) are determined collectively, and consent is again renewed in this way. The final deliverable (i.e. thesis, publication, film, etc.) must be reviewed and approved by the Education Research Coordinator and Committee before the researcher(s) make a submission to their academic/research institution. Researchers should plan ahead to accommodate the time required for feedback. The KEC is understanding of timelines and supportive of students. The Coordinator and Committee will take academic institution deadlines into consideration and provide feedback in a timely manner.

### *9. Sharing with the community*

Before thinking of sharing research outcomes beyond the community of Kahnawà:ke, researchers must share with the community first. The format of a presentation or publication is determined case by case, but all information should be communicated in plain language, and be accommodating of community members’ time and preferred spaces and modes of communication including but not limited to local newspaper articles, and community radio talk shows. Sharing with others, and sharing the responsibility means sharing with the community of Kahnawà:ke in transparent ways.

### *10. Publishing & Presenting Research*

All education research projects will be published and shared on our education database to ensure transparency, and to share knowledge collectively. Researchers that have successfully completed research projects with the KEC will be provided with guidelines to follow regarding publishing in academic journals, or presenting at conferences, etc. If a researcher is unsure about specific situations, we suggest reaching out to the Education Research Coordinator for guidance.

- Any intention to share research contents or knowledge beyond the mediums of dissemination agreed to in the ethics process must be proposed to the Education Research Coordinator and approved by the committee before the researcher/partner can move forward.
- If any partner dissents from the interpretation of the research results, the researcher must take steps to revise the writing through the consensual decision-making processes, which is the process delineated in our research protocols. If a differing interpretation persists, the researcher must explain in writing this discrepancy and allow the partner to submit his/her own explanation, and which must be included in the final writing.
- Research reports and summaries must be written in language that will be accessible to all members of Kahnawà:ke. This means that researchers must avoid jargon and academic terminology.

## Disputes, Disagreements or Violations of This Policy

We remind all parties to enter into research relationships with a good mind. Violations of this policy or related documentation and processes may result in the immediate cancellation of a research application or research partnership which may also impact completion of the project. The KEC will have no further obligations or responsibilities to a researcher or institution should there be a violation of any KEC policies or codes of conduct. Any concerns, disagreements or disputes related to education research will first be addressed by the Education Research Coordinator and ERC before being escalated to the Director of Education or KCSC if necessary. If a researcher is found to be in violation of the policy, a strong statement by the KEC Advisory Committee must be forwarded to the funding partners or university associated with the researcher and this statement must be made public so that all data shall remain secure.

## Closing Words

This policy outlined the principles, protocols and procedures for conducting community-based education research in partnership with the KEC. Our goal is to ensure ethical conduct, develop respectful relationships with research partners, and to further our educational vision for Kahnawà:ke as a means of building research capacity in our own people. Education research that is *for us by us* means that we are leaders and primary decision-makers in research activities for the benefit of our community and our present and future generations. Our children and families are the strength of our community. Our ancestral knowledge, language, and Haudenosaunee worldview and philosophy are the strength of our people. By nurturing these strengths and preparing our children to thrive in any life-path they choose, we are empowering them as Onkwehón:we and ensuring that they have a bright and prosperous future.

In closing, we would like to acknowledge the effort and contributions of many Onkwehón:we speakers, thinkers and scholars who have created a path to challenge colonial education systems, as well as created space for the reclamation of Indigenous knowledge. We drew on a vast body of work for inspiration in preparing to write this document including but not limited to: Absolon (2011), Kovach (2010), Simpson (2017), Smith (2013), Tuck (2009), Wilson (2008). We would also like to acknowledge the Mi'kmaw Ethics Watch and the Nunavut Research Institute (2000) along with Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami for their "guide for researchers"(2006) --all of which were useful in the development of the KEC's research policy.

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