## SAMPLE

## Letter of Informed Consent

## Template with Instructions

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| **Note to Researchers:** An informed consent document is used to provide potential participants with the information they need to make a decision to volunteer for a research study. Please note that this is a template developed to assist doctoral candidates at Westcliff University in the design of their informed consent form(s) (ICF). It is important that the researcher adapt their own ICF to the requirements of their particular study in accordance with the required consent elements (per [45.CFR 46.116](https://www.federalregister.gov/d/2017-01058/p-818)).  The **[text in bold]** includes instructions for what should be included in each section and there are *examples provided in italics* for each section. The instructions and examples should be deleted from the final version once the required information has been entered for your study. In addition, this instruction box must be removed from the final ICF. |

This research study is being conducted by**[Insert your full name]**who is a [**include title or status as a faculty member or student**] at [**include University or organization nam**e].

* *Example for doctoral candidates: This research study is being conducted by Sample Student who is a doctoral candidate at Westcliff University. This study is being performed in partial fulfillment of the doctoral degree requirements for the Doctor of Business Administration (DBA) or Doctor of Education in Leadership, Curriculum, and Instruction (EdD).* **Please note:** *faculty and all other researchers can remove the reference to degree fulfillment in this section.*

The title of this study is **[Insert the title of your dissertation].**

* Purpose of the Study: **[Insert a summary of the purpose of the study as written from the approved proposal. 100 word maximum].** 
  + *Examples: The purpose of this study is to evaluate school discipline plans in traditional public high schools in the XYZ school district. This study is seeking to determine the effectiveness of these discipline plans and the quality of their use.*
* Participant Criteria**: [Describe the inclusion criteria used to determine if prospective participants have the characteristics required to be included in the study, or the key features of the target population].**
  + *Examples: You are being asked to participate in this study because you are an administrator at a traditional public high school in the XYZ school district or You are employed at a company with at least 100 employees who has used videoconferencing as part of routine job duties for at least one year.*
* Participant Tasks and Time Commitment**:** **[Describe what participants will be asked to do and provide an estimate for the estimated time commitment].** 
  + *Examples: If you agree to participate in this study, you will be asked to complete a 20-question survey that takes approximately 30 minutes, or participate in a 60-minute interview and/or participate in a 1.5-hour focus group. If you decide to participate, you can refuse to answer any of the questions presented in the survey/interview/focus group.*
* Participant Rights: Your participation in this study is completely voluntary. You may withdraw your consent to participate at any time without penalty. If you withdraw your consent, you may request to have your data removed from the study unless you are an anonymous participant. This study has been reviewed and certified by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at Westcliff University. For problems or questions regarding participants' rights, you can contact the IRB chair by email at [IRB@westcliff.edu](mailto:IRB@westcliff.edu).
* Risks: **[Describe any potential risks to participants and note any accommodations made to avoid or minimize these risks for participants].**
  + *Examples: There are no known risks associated with this study other than those associated with daily living OR**“Individuals may experience some discomfort associated with their response to the survey questions based on the subject being discussed. Resources for support are listed at the end of the informed consent form.”*
* Benefits: **[Describe any benefits to the individual participant, larger community/target population, and/or in terms of contribution to knowledge/information].**
  + *Examples: “There will be no direct or immediate personal benefits for participants in this research. A potential benefit of this research will be additional knowledge and literature concerning the use of discipline plans in traditional public high schools to help school administrators make informed decisions about their programs.”*
* Compensation or incentives: **[State whether or not participants will receive compensation or incentives for their participation in the study].**
  + *Examples: You will receive a five-dollar ($5.00) Starbucks gift card for participating in this study OR You will receive no compensation/incentives for your participation in this study.*
* Data collection and protection**:** **[Explain what information will be collected from participants in the study and how the information will be used or presented in the findings].**
  + *Confidentiality is when you know the participant’s name or other identifying personal information, but you keep their identity confidential. Anonymity is when you do not collect any personal identifiers that link the participant(s) to the data. An “anonymous” study design makes it impossible to trace data or information back to the participant from whom it was obtained.*
  + *Examples: Participant names and demographic information will be collected as part of this study; however, your name will not be used in any publication or presentation of the data/findings. The information you provide will be treated confidentially, which means that no one except the principal investigator (****insert your name****) will have access to your personal responses. Research records and participant information will be kept private, unless disclosure of such records are required to be disclosed by law. No identifiers linking you to the study will be included in the final report that might be published or presented OR Participants will be anonymous and no identifiers will be collected in connection with the data.*
* **Data security:** Human subjects research regulations require that data be kept for a minimum of three (3) years.Research records, data, and participant information will be kept secure and confidential, except when disclosure is required by law and/or necessary as part of the research process (e.g., review by faculty supervisors and/or the Institutional Review Board). **[Include a clear description of the measures you will take to protect the data/information and who will have access to the data].**
  + *Example: All research materials, consent forms, and data collected will be stored electronically with encryption OR All data collected will be kept secured in a locked file cabinet to which only the researcher has access.*
* **Contact Information:** If you have questions about this study or concerns about your participation, you can contact the principal investigator **[insert your name]** by phone **[insert phone number]** or email **[insert Westcliff email address]** at any time. For problems or questions regarding participants' rights, you can contact the IRB chair by email at [IRB@westcliff.edu](mailto:IRB@westcliff.edu).

Support Resources Provided (Optional): **[This section is optional. However, if risks are identified for participants the researcher should include any support resources or services that will be made available to participants (e.g., free counseling support or human resources contact information or appointments).** The researcher may wish to explore the resources made available by the site or location where the research is being conducted or explore the resources available from the National Institutes of Health at d <https://www.nih.gov/> as an external support source**]***.*

**Disclaimer:** The Institutional Review Board (IRB) approves research proposals involving human participants after determining the plans are structured to high ethical standards, comply with federal regulations, are designed to protect participants’ rights, welfare, and privacy. Researchers alone are responsible for carrying out their approved plans. Subjects they discuss and actions they take while doing so are their own and viewpoints they express are not necessarily those of Westcliff University.

**Voluntary informed consent acknowledgement:**

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| **Note to Researcher:** Determine how you will be obtaining informed consent and use the appropriate option below. All others can be removed. |

* **If you are obtaining consent in person via signature, use the following verbiage.**

My signature below certifies that I have read and understand the explanation of this research study and what is being asked of me as a participant. I also understand that my participation in this study is completely voluntary and I am able to withdraw my consent at any time, for any reason, without penalty.

By signing this document, I consent to participate in the study and acknowledge that I know who to contact if I have questions or concerns about my participation. I have been given a copy of this consent form.

Name of Participant (printed) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Participant: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Name of Principal Investigator (printed) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Principal Investigator: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

* **If you are obtaining consent via email, include the following verbiage:**

I am responding via email to consent to participate in the study and I acknowledge that I have read and understand the explanation of this research study and what is being asked of me as a participant. I also understand that my participation in this study is completely voluntary and I am able to withdraw my consent at any time, for any reason, without penalty. I know who to contact if I have questions or concerns about my participation. I have been given a copy of this consent form.

* **If you are obtaining electronic consent via an online survey, the informed consent form should be the first page of the survey and you must include two options for the participant after the informed consent information has been provided.**
* I do not wish to participate in this research study. **(If this response is selected they should exit the survey)**
* I have read the information provided and agree to participate in this research study. **(Then, provide a URL for the participant to proceed to the electronic survey for data collection OR by clicking NEXT the participant is taken to the first page of the survey).**
* **If your survey is intended to be anonymous, include the following verbiage:**

Your participation in this research is anonymous and no information you share can be traced back to you. The principal investigator will not collect any Internet Protocol information from participants. By agreeing to participate anonymously, I understand that my data/information cannot be removed from the findings if I choose to withdraw my participation at any time.

* I do not wish to participate in this research study. **(If this response is selected, they should exit the survey)**
* I have read the information provided and agree to participate in this research study. **(Then, provide a URL for the participant to proceed to the electronic survey for data collection OR by clicking NEXT the participant is taken to the first page of the survey).**

**If consent is obtained electronically, all participants should be provided an option to print or save the informed consent form OR participants should be provided an option to contact the investigator to receive a copy using the above contact information.**