Letter of Information/Consent Form Guidance
Duty to Report Child Abuse and Neglect

Section 72 of the Child and Family Services Act (CFSA; https://www.ontario.ca/laws/statute/90c11) states that if a person, including a person who performs professional duties with respect to children under the age of 16, has reasonable grounds to suspect a child may be in need of protection, that person has a duty to report suspicions of physical, sexual, and emotional abuse, neglect, and risk of harm, directly to the Children’s Aid Society (CAS). This requirement extends to children already under a child protection order who are 16 and 17 years old. In research projects that have a reasonable possibility of the disclosure of child abuse, neglect, or risk of harm, it must be clearly stated in the Letter of Information/Consent Form that confidentiality will be breached in those instances.

Suggested language for the Letter of Information/Consent Form:

“Members of the research team will receive and have access to confidential information about children and families. Except when required by law, such as when there are reasonable suspicions of child abuse, neglect, or risk of harm, this information will be kept confidential to the extent possible.”