

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### INDIGENOUS SELF-DECLARATION

Studies across the province have identified a gap in achievement between Indigenous and non-Indigenous students. The Good Spirit School Division is committed to addressing this gap by implementing programs and measures that respond to the needs of Indigenous students.

Parents and guardians are encouraged to voluntarily identify their children as Indigenous (First Nations, Métis, or Inuit) or non-Indigenous. Individual data collected will be used to support educational programming and provide targeted supports for student success.

The information gathered serves as baseline data, helping the division understand who our Indigenous learners are and how they are doing emotionally, socially, and academically. This data is foundational to developing and implementing programs that help all students achieve success in elementary and secondary school.

#### **Why is it important for parents/guardians to participate in Indigenous Self-Declaration?**

The Good Spirit School Division strives to meet the educational needs of every student. Completing and returning the Declaration of Indigenous Ancestry form enables us to better understand students' progress and achievement. This data helps ensure appropriate supports and programming are available for students. Participation is voluntary, and all forms are kept confidential in the student's record file.

#### **Who is being asked to voluntarily self-declare as Indigenous?**

All new and current elementary and secondary students are being provided with a Declaration of Indigenous Ancestry form. Participation is completely voluntary.

#### **What is the definition of First Nations (Status, Non-Status), Métis, and Inuit?**

- *Indigenous Peoples*: A collective term for the original peoples of North America and their descendants, including First Nations, Métis, and Inuit.
- *First Nations People*: Status and Non-Status Indian peoples in Canada. Communities may also use the term "First Nation" in their names.
- *Registered Status Indian*: An individual registered under the Indian Act.
- *Non-Status Indian*: An individual of First Nations ancestry not registered under the Indian Act.
- *Métis*: People of mixed First Nations and European ancestry with a distinct culture, language, and history.
- *Inuit*: Indigenous people primarily from the Arctic regions of Canada.



**What if my child is both Métis and First Nations (Non-Status)?**

Parents or guardians can choose which ancestral background to indicate.

**Is self-declaration mandatory?**

No. Participation is voluntary. Parents/guardians can choose not to participate, and verification of ancestral background is not required.

**How will my child benefit from Indigenous Self-Declaration?**

The data helps the division identify what programs and supports are effective and where improvements are needed. This ensures resources and supports are tailored to meet the needs of Indigenous students.

**What specific information will be tracked?**

Data on Indigenous and non-Indigenous ancestry is collected as a whole to measure student success, including academic performance, graduation rates, and grade progression.

**Can self-declaration be revoked?**

Yes. Parents/guardians can revoke self-declaration by submitting a written request to the school principal. This letter will be retained in the student’s record.

**How is the information collected and maintained?**

The information is securely stored in the division’s database and in the student’s record file. Access is limited and protected to ensure confidentiality.

For further information or questions, please contact your School Administration, Superintendent, or the Director of Education.

Division Email: [info@gssd.ca](mailto:info@gssd.ca)

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