



## **Voluntary Indigenous Self-Identification**

**#200.07**

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<b>Adopted:</b>	May 2012
<b>Last Reviewed/Revised:</b>	April 2025
<b>Responsibility:</b>	Superintendent of Education
<b>Next Scheduled Review:</b>	January 2029

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### **POLICY STATEMENT:**

The Brant Haldimand Norfolk Catholic District School Board believes that all students, including students of First Nation, Métis, and Inuit ancestry, can succeed to the fullest extent of their God-given gifts and talents as outlined in the Board's vision and mission statements.

The Brant Haldimand Norfolk Catholic District School Board will ensure that the learning aspirations and potential of Indigenous students are realized through a voluntary, responsive, transparent and accountable process focused on the support of students and a strong partnership with Indigenous families and Indigenous communities.

### **APPLICATION AND SCOPE:**

The purpose of this procedure is to provide direction for Superintendents and Administrators regarding the Voluntary Indigenous Self-Identification process. The Voluntary Indigenous Self-Identification Policy is designed to achieve the following goals:

- To improve student wellbeing;
- To provide high-quality learning opportunities that are responsive, flexible and accessible to Indigenous students that will nurture a sense of belonging and appreciation of Indigenous perspectives, values and cultures;
- To improve the retention and graduation rate of Indigenous students;
- To ensure that Indigenous students are well-prepared for participation in post-secondary studies and the world of work;
- To use information and achievement data from a variety of sources to determine possible gaps and areas for focused intervention; and
- To provide effective, respectful working relationships and partnerships with First Nation, Métis and Inuit families and Indigenous communities.

### **REFERENCES:**

- Indigenous Services Canada <https://www.canada.ca/en/indigenous-services-canada>
- [Ontario First Nation, Métis and Inuit Education Policy Framework](#)

### **FORMS:**

- N/A



## **APPENDICES:**

- Appendix A: Voluntary Indigenous Self-Identification Information

## **DEFINITIONS:**

**Administrator:** Principal or Vice-Principal

**Indigenous:** Refers to the definition in the "Constitution Act, 1982, Section 35 (2) "in that Indigenous peoples 'include' Indian, Inuit and Métis." These groups include the following categories:

- First Nation, Métis and Inuit students who live in the jurisdiction of and attend provincially funded elementary or secondary schools.
- First Nation students who live in First Nation communities and attend provincially funded elementary or secondary schools under a tuition agreement.

## **ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURES:**

### **1.0 Principles**

- 1.1 The dignity and well-being of students shall be given the highest priority.
- 1.2 Voluntary Indigenous self-identification shall include all First Nation, Métis, and Inuit people, regardless of status. No proof of ancestry is required.
- 1.3 Indigenous Self-identification of First Nation, Métis and Inuit ancestry by parents/guardians, students 16/17 years of age and withdrawn from parental control, and students 18 years of age and older, shall be voluntary.

### **2.0 Information Collection**

- 2.1 Information collected under this policy will be in accordance with the Education Act, the Ontario Human Rights Code, the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (MFIPPA), and the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (FIPPA).
- 2.2 Individual Information will be confidential to individuals in the school system who require such information for the provision of resources, services, and experiences to benefit First Nation, Métis, and Inuit students.
- 2.3 Aggregate data will be available to the school system, the Ministry of Education and the First Nation, Métis, and Inuit students.
- 2.4 Aggregate data will be reported publicly by the Education Quality and Accountability Office.
- 2.5 Information is collected to:
  - 2.5.1 assist schools in better understanding the demographics of their population;
  - 2.5.2 assist the Brant Haldimand Norfolk Catholic District School Board in assessing which schools require additional programming, targeted initiatives, additional support, and the involvement of family and the greater community in the life of the school;
  - 2.5.3 identify First Nation, Métis and Inuit who would benefit from additional support; and,
  - 2.5.4 measure the Brant Haldimand Norfolk Catholic District School Board's effectiveness in improving the achievement, retention and graduation rates of First Nation, Métis, and Inuit students.



### **3.0 Responsibilities**

#### **3.1 The Superintendent of Education shall:**

- 3.1.1 engage in a consultation process with First Nation, Métis, and Inuit families and communities, as appropriate, to ensure the purpose, process and implementation of voluntary self-identification are clearly understood;
- 3.1.2 ensure that the Brant Haldimand Norfolk Catholic District School Board Student Registration Forms, as well as the Student Verification Forms, reflect the First Nation, Métis, and Inuit Self-Identification fields in the collection of accurate data and that the data entry system will correlate with the self-identification fields;
- 3.1.3 ensure that students currently attending a Brant Haldimand Norfolk Catholic District School Board elementary or secondary school will be able to self-identify by selecting the appropriate field on the Student Verification/Information Form. For students under 18 years of age, the First Nation, Métis, and Inuit self-identification requires parent/guardian signature, unless the student is 16/17 years of age and withdrawn from parental control;
- 3.1.4 ensure that new students registering in a Brant Haldimand Norfolk Catholic District School Board elementary or secondary school can acknowledge their First Nation, Métis, or Inuit ancestry via ~~on~~ the Student Registration Process and will be invited to self-identify at the time of registration;
- 3.1.5 ensure that communication material on the Voluntary Indigenous Self-Identification Policy for First Nation, Métis, and Inuit students including the Voluntary Indigenous Self-Identification **Information for Families document (Appendix A)**, is available to all currently registered families, provided to new registrants, and made available on the Brant Haldimand Norfolk Catholic District School Board website; and
- 3.1.6 ensure that all student information in the Board's data system is confidential within the Board and is protected under the Education Act R.S.O. 1990, the Ontario Student Record Guideline, Provincial Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, and the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, R.S.O., 1990.

#### **3.2 The School Administrator will ensure:**

- 3.2.1 the Student Information Forms and the Student Verification Forms are fully completed via the Student Registration Portal;
- 3.2.2 the students receive supportive programming and instructional practices that better serve the students' learning needs;
- 3.2.3 effective, respectful working relationships with First Nation, Métis and Inuit parents and the general community are promoted;
- 3.2.4 parents and students 18 years of age and older will be able to withdraw the identification or add the identification at any time, upon written request to the principal or by updating the Student Verification Form;
- 3.2.5 students who have not voluntarily self-identified will not be included in the data collection;
- 3.2.6 information will be used for the purpose of analysis and for potential enhancement of program delivery; and,
- 3.2.7 all information will be securely stored to respect privacy.



## **Voluntary Indigenous Self-Identification Frequently Asked Questions**

### **What is Voluntary Indigenous Self-Identification?**

Indigenous Self-Identification is a voluntary process designed to give students with Indigenous ancestry the opportunity to identify as First Nations, Métis, or Inuit.

### **What Are the Goals of Voluntary Indigenous Self-Identification?**

The Brant Haldimand Norfolk Catholic District School Board (BHNCD SB) is committed to enhancing the educational experience for Indigenous students. Voluntary Self Identification allows BHNCD SB to use important information to support the wellbeing and academic achievement of Indigenous students and provide services and resources that will better meet the needs of Indigenous students.

### **What Are the Benefits of Voluntary Indigenous Self-Identification?**

Voluntary Indigenous Self-Identification provides BHNCD SB with the opportunity to:

- Better understand and respond to the unique cultural and learning needs of Indigenous students.
- Develop stronger relationships with Indigenous families and communities.
- Provide cultural and academic support to Indigenous students.
- Offer additional services, programs, and opportunities.

### **Who Will Have Access to Self-Identification Information?**

BHNCD SB respects the confidentiality of students and their families. All information collected will be securely stored and only used by the Indigenous Education Services Department to assist in programming effectively for Indigenous students.

### **How Do I Self-Identify?**

Parents/Guardians of new students (and new Indigenous students who are 18 years and older) can self-identify when registering for school by completing the "Indigenous Self-Identification" section of the online registration form. Additionally, students currently in the board can self-identify by completing the "Indigenous Self-Identification" section of the annual Student Verification/Information Form.

For more information, please contact the BHNCD SB Indigenous Lead or the Student Achievement Consultant for Indigenous Education.