

## First Nation, Métis & Inuit Ancestry Terms

### Aboriginal Peoples

Aboriginal People are considered to be the descendants of the original inhabitants of North America. Section 35(2) of the Constitution Act, 1982, states: "In this Act, 'Aboriginal peoples of Canada' includes the Indian, Inuit, and Métis peoples of Canada." These separate groups have unique heritages, languages, cultural practices, and spiritual beliefs. Their common link is their indigenous ancestry.

### First Nation

The term First Nation came into common usage in the 1970s to replace the word "Indian", which many people found offensive. The term "First Nation" has been adopted to replace the word "band" in the names of communities. Not all communities refer to themselves as First Nations. For example, the Mohawks in the Muskoka area refer to themselves as the Whata Mohawks.

### First Nation (Status)

First Nation "Status Indians" are people who are entitled to have their names included on the Indian Register, an official list maintained by the federal government. Certain criteria determine who can be registered as a "Status Indian" and are entitled to certain rights and benefits under the *Indian Act*.

### First Nation (Non-Status)

First Nation "Non-Status Indians" are people who consider themselves Indians or members of a First Nation but whom the Government of Canada does not recognize as Indians under the *Indian Act*, either because they are unable to prove their Indian status or have lost their status rights. "Non-Status Indians" are not entitled to the same rights and benefits available to "Status Indians".

### Métis (Métis Nation)

This is a French word for "mixed blood". Historically, the term Métis and Half-Breed applied to the children of the Fur Trade Era whose parents usually included a European father (French, English, Scottish, etc.) and First Nations (Cree, Dene, Ojibwe) or Inuit mothers. Today, the term Métis is used to describe all "mixed blood" Aboriginal people who self-identify as Métis and whose ancestors developed a unique Métis culture rooted to the historical Métis Nation.

### Inuit

The Inuit are Aboriginal people who have their geographic roots in northern Canada, living mainly in Nunavut, the Northwest Territories, northern Quebec and Labrador. Ontario has a very small Inuit population. The Inuit are not covered by the *Indian Act*.

*References: Ontario First Nation, Métis, and Inuit Education Policy Framework 2007; Métis National Council Website 2008.*



# First Nation, Métis & Inuit Ancestry

VOLUNTARY & CONFIDENTIAL  
SELF-IDENTIFICATION

Schools, Parents and Communities:  
Creating Success for First Nation,  
Métis & Inuit Students

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Simcoe County  
District School Board

## Background

The Aboriginal Education Department of the Ontario Ministry of Education has given direction to school boards to develop a self-identification policy which will allow schools to identify First Nation, Métis and Inuit students.

Other provinces, Northern Ontario School Boards and the Toronto District School Board have collected this type of information in order to create programming that is effective and relevant for First Nation, Métis and Inuit students.

## What is First Nation, Métis & Inuit Self-Identification?

Parents/guardians will be provided with the opportunity to self-identify First Nation, Métis and Inuit ancestry for their children. Students age 18 and older will also have the same opportunity. Disclosing First Nation, Métis and Inuit ancestry is completely **voluntary** and **confidential** and **NO proof of ancestry is required**.

## Why is the SCDSB collecting data and how will it be stored?

The SCDSB Aboriginal Education Advisory Circle has been working to advise the Board on the education of First Nation, Métis and Inuit students.

The data collected will only be reported on as a whole and will be used for the purposes of creating more relevant and culturally appropriate school programming which will meet the needs of First Nation, Métis and Inuit students.

Information and data will be collected and maintained according to the *Education Act*, *Ontario Student Record Guidelines*, and the *Municipal Freedom of Information and Privacy Act*.



## Why Collect Data?

- To support high level of achievement of First Nation, Métis and Inuit students
- To reduce gaps in student achievement
- To promote high levels of public confidence
- To create a baseline measure for assessing programs already in place and for developing new programs that are relevant to the First Nation, Métis and Inuit student population

*Simcoe County District School Board  
On-Going Programming*

## Student Programming

- Native Language Courses
- Native Studies Courses
- Seventh Fire Alternative Learning Program

## Professional Development to support First Nation, Métis and Inuit learners

- Workshops and Seminars
- Cultural Awareness Training
- Curriculum development for First Nation, Métis and Inuit learners
- Additional Qualification Courses

## Community Involvement

- Aboriginal Education Advisory Circle
- Community information sessions and focus groups
- First Nation, Métis and Inuit celebrations and events

## The Self-Identification Process

There are several ways in which parents/guardians can self-identify First Nation, Métis and Inuit ancestry for their children:

## New Registrant

Office Index Cards used to register new students have been modified to include the First Nation, Métis and Inuit ancestry fields.

## Student Verification/Identification Forms

Student Verification/Identification Forms will be sent home in September. Parents/guardians will have the opportunity to verify information they have previously provided regarding First Nation, Métis and Inuit ancestry.



## Students 18 Years of Age

Students age 18 and older are legally eligible to self-identify First Nation, Métis and Inuit ancestry without parental consent.

## What will First Nation, Métis and Inuit Self-Identification look like?

This process is completely voluntary and confidential and NO proof of ancestry is required. The First Nation, Métis and Inuit identity fields will include the following information:

First Nation, Métis and Inuit Ancestry: I consider my child to be of First Nation, Métis or Inuit ancestry.

Yes  No

The categories that apply to my child are checked below:

- First Nation Status
- First Nation Non-Status
- Métis
- Inuit

Language of First Nation, Métis or Inuit Ancestry:

- Ojibwe
- Cree
- Oji-Cree
- Mohawk
- Michif
- Inuktitut
- English

Other – Please identify \_\_\_\_\_