



PROCEDURE

SO-016

VOLUNTARY INDIGENOUS SELF-IDENTIFICATION

Superintendent Responsible: Superintendent of Education, Indigenous Education	Initial Effective Date: 2020/02/24
Last Updated: 2026/02/20	Next Review Date: 2030/02/20

Purpose:

To better meet the needs of First Nation, Métis and Inuit (FNMI) students, the Grand Erie District School Board (Grand Erie) provides a voluntary self-identification process to ensure that all parent(s)/caregiver(s) for FNMI students have the opportunity to voluntarily self-identify as Indigenous. The data collected will be shared with the schools, Board of Trustees, and the Ministry of Education in order to assess the progress in improving FNMI student learning, achievement, mental health, well-being and belonging.

Guiding Principles:

1.0 Outcomes of the Voluntary Self-Identification Process

Grand Erie has two primary outcomes for Indigenous Education: To attain higher levels of student achievement and close the gaps between Indigenous and non-Indigenous students in the areas of literacy, retention of students in school, graduation rates and advancement to their chosen post-secondary goal. Grand Erie has established the following outcome statements of the Voluntary Self-Identification Process:

- a) to provide high-quality, learner-oriented, culturally, and historically relevant teaching and learning experiences for all students
- b) to provide learning opportunities that are responsive, flexible, and accessible for FNMI students
- c) to improve the success of FNMI students in elementary and secondary school courses and programs
- d) to improve literacy and mathematics EQAO (Education Quality and Accountability Office) scores for FNMI students
- e) to increase the graduation rates for FNMI students
- f) to provide access to culturally relevant and authentic services and supports for FNMI students

2.0 Implementation

Parent(s)/caregiver(s) for FNMI students will be given the opportunity to self-identify as FNMI. Schools will include an annual verification process insert and self-identification cards will be available for parents and visitors and ensure information about voluntary self-identification is provided during the Kindergarten registration and new student to board registration process. Administrator(s) will be responsible for ensuring that all students, and their parent(s)/caregiver(s), who wish will have the opportunity to self-identify in one of the following two categories:

- a) FNMI students who live in the jurisdiction of and attend provincially funded elementary or secondary schools; and
- b) First Nation students who live in First Nation communities and attend provincially funded elementary or secondary schools under a tuition agreement.

3.0 Data Collection, Storage, Use and Protection

Grand Erie is responsible and respectful in all matters relating to collection, storage, use and protection of students' information. All data collected under this Self-Identification process will be securely stored. The data collected will be shared with the schools, Board,

and the Ministry of Education in order to assess the progress in improving FNMI student learning, achievement, mental health, well-being and belonging.

All student information in Grand Erie's student information system is confidential and is protected under the *Education Act*, 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*.

Definitions

Grand Erie acknowledges the diversity of Nations across Turtle Island. Where possible, the specific Nation's name will be used, otherwise, the term First Nation, Métis or Inuit will be referenced in print or otherwise. These groups include the following categories:

- a) First Nation, Métis and Inuit students who live in the jurisdiction of and attend provincially funded elementary or secondary schools; and
- b) First Nation students who live in First Nation communities and attend provincially funded elementary or secondary schools under a Reciprocal Education Agreement.

Reference(s):

- Voluntary Indigenous Self-Identification Policy (SO-16)
- [Constitution Act, 1982, Sections 35\(2\)](#)
- [Ontario First Nation, Métis and Inuit Education Policy Framework](#)
- [Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, R.S.O. 1990, c. F.31](#)
- [Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, R.S.O. 1990, c. M.56](#)
- Ontario Student Records Procedure (SO-104)