



Aboriginal Identity Declaration

Questions and Answers for Parents

1. What is Aboriginal Identity Declaration?

Aboriginal Identity Declaration (AID) is an opportunity for parents/guardians of Aboriginal students to declare their child's Aboriginal identity within Manitoba's Kindergarten-Grade 12 public school system. AID information received from parents/guardians is entered into a database by the school office. The information from each school is then reported yearly to the Department of Manitoba Education, Citizenship and Youth.

2. Why are Aboriginal students being asked to declare their ancestral/cultural background?

AID information declared by parents/guardians is voluntary.

AID information is needed to support efforts to plan and improve programs. It can help schools/divisions to assess learner and classroom needs and to plan programs to support Aboriginal students.

One of the Department of Education, Citizenship and Youth's goals is to increase high school graduation rates. AID information helps to support this goal. For more information about the Manitoba's goals in relation to Aboriginal education, please visit http://www.edu.gov.mb.ca/abedu/action_plan/index.html.

3. Statistics Canada collects this information. Why are parents/guardians being asked to provide information to the school?

Statistics Canada collects information about Aboriginal identity based on the Legal Definition of Aboriginal peoples

as identified in the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. It collects information on some Aboriginal languages spoken in the household but it does not typically collect the language and cultural elements. It also gathers this information primarily through the census every 5 years. Census data does not provide the level of detail compared to AID, nor does it provide the data on a yearly basis. The data collected through the AID represents a more complete picture as it is being collected by schools as part of the student registration process.

4. I'm a First Nation member and my partner is Metis. Which box do we check?

For families that have multiple ancestral/cultural elements, choose what is most relevant for your family. For more detail, please see the AID identifier descriptions provided on the website at <http://www.edu.gov.mb.ca/aed/abidentity.html>.

5. I know I'm Aboriginal but I don't speak any Aboriginal languages. Do I still check any boxes?

Yes. The linguistic identifiers refer to ancestral/cultural identity, not your ability to speak a specific Aboriginal language. Select the identifier(s) that best reflect your identity. If you are still unsure what to choose, you can check the "Other" linguistic category, and write "uncertain" in the space provided.

6. My child is adopted and Aboriginal, while our family is not Aboriginal. What box do I check?

You may check the box most appropriate for your child. If you do not know your child's Aboriginal ancestry, you can select "Uncertain of ancestry" from the Aboriginal identifier list.

7. I moved to Manitoba from another province, and my language is not on the AID list. What box do I check?

As the list of languages spoken by Aboriginal people in North America is quite large, the AID uses the majority of the languages spoken in Manitoba. If your language is not listed, please check the box labeled "Other". Then you may indicate the language(s) spoken in the space provided (if known, write the language, or if unknown, write "uncertain").

8. There are so many languages to choose from and my language choice is spelled differently than I remember it being spelled. Are they likely the same?

Yes. They can be considered the same for the purposes of the AID. There are many different ways of spelling the major language groups. As an example, the word Ojibwe can be spelled, Ojibway and Ojibwa. The same can be said of Inuktituq. It can also be spelled as Inuktitut. Both are considered to be the language spoken by the Inuit people.

9. I've already declared my child a couple of years ago. Do I need to declare my child every year?

No. If you have declared your child in the past, you won't need to declare your child every year.

The school office will provide AID information to parents/guardians every year as Aboriginal identity is not assumed. Also, sometimes the information parents/guardians provide the school may need to be updated, such as if a child is new to the public school system, or if changes were made to the list of AID identifiers.

If your child is new to the public school system, or if you need to make a change to the declaration you had previously provided for your child, then a declaration form can be obtained from your child's school office at any time.

10. We've moved to a different school in a different school division. Do I need to declare my child again?

No. If parents/guardians have declared their child's Aboriginal identity in the past, the declaration information will remain in the database throughout the child's education in the K-12 public school system.

Aboriginal Identity Declaration (AID)

Identifier Descriptions

Aboriginal

Section 35 (2) of Canada's Constitution Act 1982 defines Aboriginal peoples as Indian, Inuit and Métis peoples of Canada. These peoples are diverse with their own unique languages and cultures.

First Nation

Term now used to replace the former legal term for peoples referred to as "Indian" (as defined in the Indian Act).

Aboriginal peoples who identify as First Nations include registered/status/treaty and non-status/non-treaty "Indians". For example, the Dakota people of Manitoba that do not have treaties with the Crown may still identify as First Nations people.

First Nations peoples identify with the Nation to which they belong. There are five First Nations predominant in Manitoba – Cree, Ojibway, Dakota, Dene and Oji-Cree.

Métis

Aboriginal peoples of mixed First Nation and European or Canadian ancestry who identify as Métis people.

Inuit

Aboriginal peoples of Arctic Canada (primarily of Churchill in Northern Manitoba, Nunavut, Northwest Territories, Northern Labrador, Northern Quebec and Northern Manitoba).

Uncertain of ancestry

Due to factors such as the Residential Schools experience, 60s Scoop, Child Welfare and Adoption practices, many Aboriginal peoples have experienced impacts to their family dynamics resulting in loss of identity. Some Aboriginal peoples, although they are aware they have Aboriginal ancestry, may be unable to identify with a particular classification as noted above. In this event, the "uncertain of ancestry" identifier may be selected.

Linguistical/Cultural Identifiers

Descriptions for the distinct groups in Manitoba

Anishinaabe (Ojibway/Saulteaux) - Refers to peoples of the Algonquian language family who identify with Odawa, Ojibwe/Ojibway/Saulteaux, and Chippewa.

Ininew (Cree) - Refers to peoples of the Algonquian language family who identify with Cree dialects (for example, Swampy Cree/Ininimowin, Woods Cree/Nihithawiwinn and Plains Cree).

Dene (Sayisi) - Refers to peoples of the Athapaskan language family who identify with the distinct groups of Dene (ie. T'Suline Dene and Sayisi Dene).

Dakota - Refers to peoples of the Siouan language family who identify with distinct Assiniboine, Dakota, Lakota, and Nakoda.

Oji-Cree - Refers to peoples whose language and culture derive from mixed Ojibwe and Cree traditions, but are generally considered a distinct nation from either of their parent groups. They are considered one of the component groups of Anishinaabe, and reside primarily in a transitional zone between traditional Ojibwe lands to their south and traditional Cree lands to their north (in Northeastern Manitoba, this refers to the Island Lake region).

Michif - Refers to peoples of the Métis Nation and may speak the Michif language which is a mixed Cree or Ojibway and French.

Inuktitut - Refers to peoples of distinct Inuit language families (ie. Inuvialuktun, Inuvinnaqtun, Inuittitut, and Inuttut).

Other (please indicate if not on the list above) _____ - this identifier is meant to be used for Aboriginal peoples that do not identify with one of the above linguistical/cultural identifiers (for example, an Aboriginal person coming from another province that does not identify with the above identifiers distinct to Manitoba, can declare here).

More information about Aboriginal Identity Declaration can be found at www.edu.gov.mb.ca/aed/abidentity.html