



## Indigenous Education

School District 71 (Comox Valley)  
665 16th Street, Courtenay, BC V9N 1X6  
Tel: 250-331-4040

**September 2024**

Dear parents / guardians of Indigenous students:

Re: **Self-Identification of Indigenous Ancestry (First Nations, Métis or Inuit)**

**Please Note:** Indigenous Ancestry is determined on a **voluntary basis through self-identification**. This includes First Nations (Status or Non-Status), Métis or Inuit Ancestry. **No documentation** other than a verbal self-identification is required and ancestry may go back several generations. As required by the Ministry of Education, this form is sent home in September of each school year.

Indigenous Education Services in School District #71 (Comox Valley) offers various supports and opportunities to over 1,750 students of Indigenous Ancestry attending 23 school sites and through our online learning school (NIDES). Our goal is to enrich the educational opportunities for all our Indigenous students. The focus for our service is to enhance all Indigenous students' understanding of their heritage, their sense of belonging and the personal belief that they can be successful in B.C.'s public school system. Support varies from school to school, and differs from one level to another (elementary, middle, and secondary). The areas of support available include a variety of the following:

- **Academic monitoring and support** through online check-ins, online mentoring and/or online tutoring services as needed
- **Home-school support** - support for families between school and home (advocating for your child with you)
- **Personal Support / Advocacy** - creating a positive learning environment for Indigenous learners
- **Cultural awareness activities** – cultural activities shared online
- **Indigenous cultural group activities**– field trips, Big House Experience, post secondary information sessions
- **Integrating culture** - building bridges between Indigenous and Non-Indigenous students to create a positive learning environment for Indigenous learners through introduction of Indigenous curriculum and cultural activities in schools. This can include special guests, presentations in schools hosted by Indigenous Education.

Our department has Indigenous staff (teachers and support staff) who support all students of Canadian Indigenous ancestry (Status, Non-Status, Métis and Inuit) who are enrolled in our schools. Each student is monitored and supported in a way that meets their personal needs. You will receive a welcome letter and a phone call / email for new students from your child's Indigenous Support Worker during the month of September.

**In your child's registration, we noticed that you have identified your student as having Indigenous Ancestry. Your child will be automatically enrolled in our program and become entitled to receive the services offered by Indigenous Education of Comox Valley Schools (SD71).** If you do not wish for your child to be involved in the program, we will require a written letter or email from you requesting that your child(ren) not be involved in the program. For questions, please phone us at 250-331-4040 Ext 31901 or email [giselaine.ballantyne@sd71.bc.ca](mailto:giselaine.ballantyne@sd71.bc.ca)

If your child is new to their school, the Indigenous Support Worker who supports your child in their school will also be contacting you by phone, e-mail or in person during September to answer any questions you may have. Thank you for supporting our Indigenous Education programming and initiatives.

Gila'kasla,

**Bruce Carlos, District Principal - Indigenous Education**