



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.