

Aboriginal Identity Declaration:

A Guide for Parents and Guardians



Manitoba Education, Citizenship and Youth is committed to improving education for Aboriginal students. **Aboriginal Identity Declaration (AID)** information is a priority of Manitoba Education, Citizenship and Youth.

AID information allows parents or guardians of Aboriginal students to declare their children's Aboriginal identity within Manitoba's school system.

Providing AID information is voluntary.

AID helps students succeed

AID information helps the Manitoba government plan and deliver specific programs for Aboriginal students and improve students' success throughout the province.

As part of Manitoba Education, Citizenship and Youth goals for Aboriginal Education, AID information aims to increase high school graduation rates of Aboriginal students and close the educational gap between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students.

AID information is accurate

Although Statistics Canada collects some information about Aboriginal identity and Aboriginal languages spoken in the household, it only gathers this data once every five years in its census survey.

AID provides more accurate, detailed information.

AID information is recorded by schools and reported yearly to Manitoba Education, Citizenship and Youth.

Identifier Descriptions

The following descriptions may help when completing Aboriginal Identity Declaration:

- **Aboriginal** – Section 35 (2) of *Canada's Constitution Act 1982* defines "Aboriginal" as Indian [First Nation], Inuit and Métis peoples of Canada.



• **First Nation** – This term replaces the former legal term for people referred to as "Indian" (as defined in the *Indian Act*). Aboriginal people who identify as First Nations include registered/status/treaty and non-status/non-treaty Indians. (ex: the Dakota people of Manitoba who do not have treaties with the Crown may still identify as First Nations people.) First Nations people 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 people of mixed First Nation and European or Canadian ancestry identify as Métis people.

• **Inuit** – Aboriginal people of Arctic Canada (primarily Churchill in Northern Manitoba, Nunavut, Northwest Territories, Northern Labrador, Northern Quebec and Northern Manitoba) identify as Inuit.

• **Uncertain of ancestry** – Because of the residential school experience, the '60s Scoop and child welfare and adoption practices, many Aboriginal people lost their identity. Some Aboriginal people, although aware of Aboriginal ancestry, may not identify with any of the above. In this case, the "uncertain of ancestry" description may be selected.

Language/Cultural Identifiers

The following descriptions for the distinct groups in Manitoba may help when completing the Aboriginal Identity Declaration.

• **Anishinaabe (Ojibway/Saulteaux)** – This refers to people of the Algonquian language family who identify with Odawa, Ojibwe/Ojibway/Saulteaux and Chippewa.

• **Ininew (Cree)** – This refers to people of the Algonquian language family who identify with Cree dialects (Swampy Cree/Ininimowin, Woods Cree/Nihithawiwin and Plains Cree).

• **Dene (Sayisi)** – This refers to people of the Athapaskan language family who identify with the distinct groups of Dene (T'Suline Dene and Sayisi Dene).

• **Dakota** – This refers to people of the Siouan language family who identify with Assiniboine, Dakota, Lakota and Nakoda.

• **Oji-Cree** – This refers to people whose language and culture come 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** – This refers to people of the Métis Nation who may speak the Michif language which is a mixed Cree or Ojibway and French.

• **Inuktitut** – This refers to people of distinct Inuit language families (Inuvialuktun, Inuvinnaqtun, Inuittitut and Inuttut).

• **Other (please indicate if not on the list above)** – This refers to Aboriginal people who do not identify with any of the above linguistic/cultural descriptions (ex: an Aboriginal person from another province who does not identify with the above descriptions distinct to Manitoba may declare as other).

Frequently Asked Questions

I'm a First Nation member and my partner is Métis. What box do I check?

For families who have multiple ancestral/cultural backgrounds, choose what is most relevant for your family. For more details, please see the AID descriptions provided or visit www.edu.gov.mb.ca/aed/abidentity.html.

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 that best reflects your identity. If you are unsure what to choose, check the "other" box and write "uncertain" in the space provided.

My Aboriginal child is adopted but our family is not Aboriginal. What box do I check?

Check the box most appropriate for your child. If you do not know your child's Aboriginal ancestry, select "uncertain of ancestry."



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

AID lists the majority of the languages spoken in Manitoba. If your language is not listed, check the box labeled "other". You may then indicate the language spoken in the space provided or, if unknown, select "uncertain".

There are so many languages to choose from and my language is spelled differently than those listed. Are they likely the same?

Yes, they are likely the same. There are various ways of spelling the major language groups. For example, Ojibwe can also be spelled Ojibway or even Ojibwa. The same can be said of Inuktituq. It can also be spelled Inuktitut. Both are considered the language spoken by the Inuit.

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

No. The AID declaration form is provided to parents or guardians every year the child is enrolled in the Manitoba public school system. However, if you have already declared your child in a previous year, you do not need to declare your child again.

If your child is new to the public school system, or if you need to make changes to the declaration, you can obtain a declaration form any time from the school office.

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

No. If you have already declared your child in a previous year, you do not need to declare your child again. Your child's information will remain in the database throughout the child's education in the Kindergarten to Grade 12 public school system.

Contact Information

For more information about Aboriginal Identity Declaration, please contact your child's school office or the Aboriginal Education Directorate at 945-7886 or Toll Free in MB at 1-800-282-8069 (ext. 7886).

For more information about the Aboriginal Education Directorate, please visit: www.edu.gov.mb.ca/aed/