



BRITISH COLUMBIA

# Independent School Boarding Guidelines 2022



BRITISH  
COLUMBIA

Ministry of Education  
and Child Care

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# Introduction



## ABOUT THESE GUIDELINES

### PURPOSE STATEMENT

The purpose of these British Columbia Independent School Boarding Guidelines (*the “Guidelines”*) is to provide province-wide guidance and better practice benchmarks for British Columbia independent schools offering boarding.

Prior to creating these Guidelines there was no framework that provided clear guidance for student safety in boarding settings. The Ministry of Education and Child Care determined that this was an essential piece of work and partnered with the Federation of Independent School Associations in British Columbia (FISABC), the Independent Schools Association of British Columbia (ISABC) and B.C. independent schools with boarding facilities to collaborate and create these Guidelines. It is important to all parties that independent schools are providing boarding experiences for students that support their safety and contribute to strong educational, social, mental and overall health outcomes.

In 2020, in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Ministry of Education and Child Care worked together with ISABC and independent schools offering boarding to strengthen their partnership and create solid ties, managing the evolving and complex challenges that arose. Boarding schools worked together and with the Ministry to develop protocols to address COVID-19 for students in boarding. Subsequently it was determined that there would be value in considering ways that the pandemic-related guidance could be expanded for use on an ongoing basis.

In response, these Guidelines were developed by the Ministry of Education and Child Care in the Spring of 2022, in collaboration with a Boarding Guidelines Working Group (the “Working Group”) comprised of independent school sector representatives from a range of independent schools offering boarding.

These Guidelines support both existing independent schools providing boarding and independent schools planning to provide a boarding option. Schools providing boarding are encouraged to utilize these Guidelines as part of their school’s continuous improvement efforts.

## ENTITIES COVERED BY THESE GUIDELINES



These Guidelines are intended for use by all certified B.C. independent schools offering boarding. They **do not** provide guidance or consideration for any of the following:

- Dormitories or residential facilities operated by schools, institutions or entities that fall outside of the scope of B.C.'s *Independent School Act* (i.e. not operating as a certified B.C. independent school) including:
  - *K-12 public schools.*
  - *Post-secondary institutions.*
  - *Private language, career training or tutoring schools or institutes.*
  - *Residential care facilities established for children regulated by the Ministry of Health (e.g. facilities licensed under the *Community Care and Assisted Living Act* for children and youth).*
  - *Facilities that operate to support children and youth (i.e., residential care homes) and are supported by the Ministry of Children and Family Development.*
- Residential facilities associated with B.C.'s criminal justice system (i.e., youth custody centres).
- Temporary accommodation arranged by or affiliated with a certified B.C. independent school for students attending field trips and overnight camps.
- Homestay situations for international students attending a certified B.C. independent school. The *British Columbia K-12 International Student Homestay Guidelines* provide consistent, province-wide best practice standards for B.C.'s K-12 homestay sector.





## WORKING GROUP CONTRIBUTIONS

The Ministry of Education and Child Care gratefully acknowledges the contributions of a working group consisting of independent school representatives who willingly shared their combined expertise to advance these Guidelines.

Bodwell High School	Stephen Goobie - <a href="#">PRINCIPAL</a>
	Robyn Fallis - <a href="#">DIRECTOR OF BOARDING</a>
Brentwood College School	Bud Patel - <a href="#">HEAD OF SCHOOL</a>
	Liam Sullivan - <a href="#">DEPUTY HEAD, STUDENT LIFE</a>
Phoenix Magnet Academy	Geoff Taylor - <a href="#">HEAD OF SCHOOL</a>
St. John's Academy	Michelle Meadows - <a href="#">PRINCIPAL</a>
	Bruce Schei - <a href="#">HEAD OF STUDENT SERVICES</a>
St. Margaret's School	Sharon Klein - <a href="#">HEAD OF SCHOOL</a>
	Nicole Folkes - <a href="#">DIRECTOR OF BOARDING</a>
Shawnigan Lake School	Larry Lamont - <a href="#">HEAD OF SCHOOL</a>
	Wendy Milne - <a href="#">ASSISTANT HEAD, ACADEMICS</a>

The Ministry of Education and Child Care also appreciates the insights offered by the First Nations Education Steering Committee (FNESC) and Métis Nation British Columbia. Representatives of the Ministry of Advanced Education and Skills Training, Ministry of Children and Family Development and the Ministry of Health have also provided content where appropriate.

## BOARDING AND LEGISLATION

The Ministry of Education and Child Care is responsible for administering the [Independent School Act](#) and the [Independent School Regulation](#). The Ministry of Education and Child Care is also responsible for developing policies related to the regulation of independent schools. Concurrently with the development of these Guidelines, the Ministry of Education and Child Care has developed and implemented an Independent School Boarding Policy, which requires that each school offering boarding have a written boarding policy or policies and related procedures to support student health, well-being, safety, educational and social outcomes.

All schools offering boarding are required to follow all applicable federal, provincial, and municipal laws that apply to boarding. For the purposes of being compliant with applicable legislation and to mitigate potential risks and liabilities associated with boarding, with the exception of students, it is the responsibility of each of the groups and/or individuals described in this document to be familiar with applicable legislation and to seek legal advice as needed.

## SUPPORTING FIRST NATIONS, MÉTIS AND INUIT LEARNERS

The Province of B.C. is committed to true, lasting reconciliation by implementing the [United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples](#) (UN Declaration), the [Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act \(Declaration Act\)](#), the [Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act Action Plan](#) (the “Action Plan”) and the [Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada: Calls to Action](#).

The Province of British Columbia recognizes First Nations, Métis and Inuit as the Indigenous Peoples of Canada with rights recognized and affirmed in *section 35 of the Constitution Act, 1982*. The Province also recognizes that First Nations, Métis and Inuit are distinct, rights-bearing communities, and is committed to a distinctions-based approach to its relationship with each. As not all rights are uniform or the same among or between all Indigenous Peoples, a distinctions-based approach may require that the Province’s relationships and engagement with First Nations, Métis and Inuit Peoples include different approaches or actions and result in different outcomes.

Schools providing boarding to First Nations, Métis and Inuit students should be familiar with [the UN Declaration, the Declaration Act, the Action Plan, and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada: Calls to Action](#). Schools should understand and respect that they are located on traditional First Nation territory and work directly with First Nations to collaboratively support First Nation students in boarding. Schools are also advised to consider the diversity of First Nations and other Indigenous peoples in British Columbia, particularly the distinct languages, cultures, customs, practices, rights, legal traditions, institutions, governance structures, relationships to territories and knowledge systems.

Boarding schools should acknowledge, understand and be deliberate about teaching the [truth](#) of Canada’s residential school system to all students. Further, schools and staff should recognize that supporting First Nations, Métis and Inuit students in boarding and, communicating with their families and communities requires particular sensitivity to the far-reaching and traumatic impacts of the residential school system. Boarding schools should also understand that Indigenous students in British Columbia experience higher rates of bullying and racism than their peers, which directly impacts the health and well-being of learners, families, and communities. Boarding schools should provide opportunities so that First Nation students are confident in their self-identity, their families, their communities and traditional values, languages and cultures.

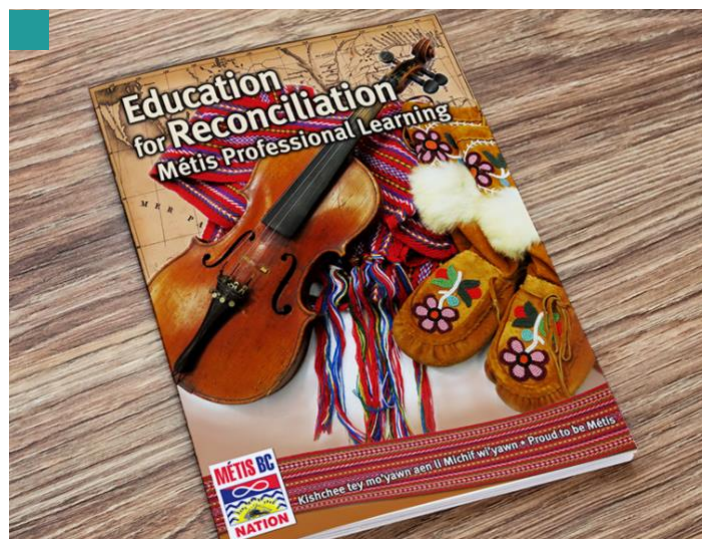


The First Nations Education Steering Committee (FNESC) and the First Nations Schools Association (FNSA) have developed a series of powerful teacher resources to supplement the content available in the B.C. curriculum, **The BC First Nations Land, Title, and Governance Teacher Resource Guide** can support the understanding of traditional and contemporary forms of First Nations governance specific to First Nations in BC. **The Indian Residential Schools and Reconciliation Resources** were developed in response to the call by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada for education bodies to develop age-appropriate educational materials about Indian residential schools, to help students of all cultural backgrounds gain an understanding of the history of the relationship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people over Canada's history and, to engage young people to take part in the journey of reconciliation. Resources developed by FNESC and FNSA reflect the **First Peoples Principles of Learning** as well as the Calls to Action of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, including the call to "integrate Indigenous Knowledge and teaching methods into classrooms" and "build student capacity for intercultural understanding, empathy and mutual respect."



FOR ADDITIONAL RESOURCES SEE:  
[fnesc.ca/learningfirstpeoples/](https://fnesc.ca/learningfirstpeoples/)


Metis Nation British Columbia has published important resources, including **Education for Reconciliation Metis Professional Learning guide**, and **"Kaa-wiichitoyaahk: We Take Care of Each Other"** a cultural wellness guide that explores the rich history and unique identity of Métis people in British Columbia, touching on historical and contemporary Metis experiences with Education systems, including residential schools. In addition to this, the **Metis in BC virtual exhibit** includes videos that promote Metis visibility and inclusion. It also recommends that educators take time to access publications by the Legacy of Hope foundation, including **Forgotten: The Metis Residential school experience**, and **Inuit and the Residential School System**, as some Metis and Inuit students from the northern Territories rely on BC's independent schools with boarding facilities to receive a formal education.



## WHO SHOULD USE THESE GUIDELINES?

This document categorizes stakeholders into six groups and outlines guidelines and better practice benchmarks for each group in the sections associated with each group. All groups involved in arranging, delivering, supporting, or participating in boarding programs at certified independent schools in B.C. should use these Guidelines.

Group	Description	Section
School Authorities	A society, company, or person that operates or intends to operate an independent school.	SECTION 1
Independent School Administrators	B.C. certified independent school head/principal or member of the management team.	SECTION 2
Boarding Staff	Any staff member with responsibilities to provide any services to students in the boarding environment. <i>[ NOTE: based on a school's structure and composition, some schools may consider all school staff as boarding staff. Other schools may see a distinction between school staff and boarding staff. ]</i>	SECTION 3
Boarding Students	Students who are both enrolled with and reside (part-time or full-time) in a boarding program in a B.C. certified independent school.	SECTION 4
Parents / Guardians	A boarding student's parent(s) or legally appointed guardian(s).	SECTION 5
International / domestic student authorized representatives	Individuals or companies that assist international and/or domestic students and families in selecting a suitable school in which to board, commonly known as student "agents".	SECTION 6

 For questions about these Guidelines, please email: [EDUC.IndependentSchoolsOffice@gov.bc.ca](mailto:EDUC.IndependentSchoolsOffice@gov.bc.ca)



## ABOUT BOARDING IN B.C.

B.C. certified independent schools are proud of the world-class education system, welcoming communities and the beauty of the province's natural environment. At the time of this publication, there are close to 370 certified independent schools in B.C. Thirteen of them offer boarding, representing approximately 3% of the total independent school population. Independent schools with boarding facilities are found in a variety of settings, from rural B.C. to urban centres, and from B.C.'s Interior to Vancouver Island. These schools offer a wide range of programs, set against the distinctive charm and character of their respective community environments.

Schools offering boarding vary significantly in overall size, with total enrolments (counting both boarding and non-boarding students) numbering from the mid – 20s to over 1,200. The number of boarding students at these schools ranges from fewer than 30 to 500. At some schools almost all students board, at other schools, boarding students form a minority of the student population. In terms of approach, most schools are secular and co-educational, but some are faith-based and single gender. Whatever their size or approach to boarding, it is a point of pride and commitment for B.C. certified independent schools to maintain high-quality boarding experiences.



Some independent schools may be members of associations that provide supports for boarding. These associations include **Canadian Accredited Independent Schools (CAIS)** and **The Association of Boarding Schools (TABS)**.

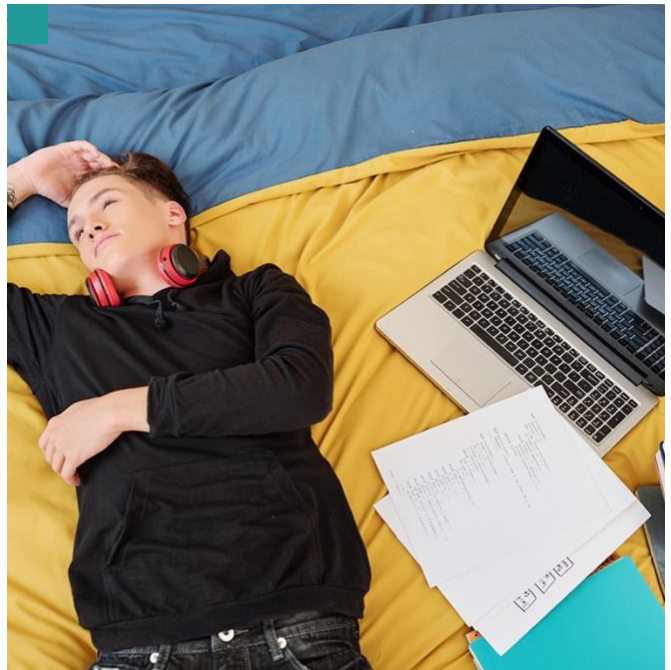
### GOVERNMENT ENTITIES AND/OR LOCAL SERVICE PROVIDERS OFFER SERVICES IN THE FOLLOWING AREAS:

- Child protection services in B.C. are intended to safeguard children from harm. Where there is reason to believe a child has been abused or neglected, or is otherwise in need of protection, child protection social workers have the delegated authority to investigate and take appropriate action to ensure that child's safety. The *Child, Family and Community Service Act* (CFCSA) is the legislative authority for the Ministry of Children and Family Development Child Protection Services. Under the CFCSA, the Minister designates a Director of Child Protection, who in turn delegates the provision of services across the province to child protection social workers.
- The Ministry of Health is responsible to promote and protect the health and well-being of students and staff, in accordance with the *Public Health Act*.
- The Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General is responsible for conducting criminal record checks in accordance with the *Criminal Records Review Act*.
- Local police services investigate alleged contraventions of the law and respond to calls for assistance.

## CONNECTEDNESS

The approach taken to boarding programs and services may have a significant impact on students' connectedness and well-being. School connectedness is about creating a community where everyone feels safe, seen, heard, supported, significant and cared for. The focus is on building strong, positive relationships: among students; between students and school staff; between schools and local First Nations as well as other Indigenous communities, and between school staff, families, and the larger community. The presence of caring relationships in schools - *the heart of school connectedness* – is increasingly recognized as a vital component of successful schools.

The research is strong and consistent; students who feel *connected to school* do *better academically* and *are healthier*.



More information available at:

<https://healthyschoolsbcc.ca/healthy-schools-bc-resources/school-connectedness/>





# Guidelines



## SECTION 1: SCHOOL AUTHORITIES



*A School Authority is a society, company, or person that operates or intends to operate an independent school.*

To promote the best possible boarding experience for students, the school authority should:

- Maintain strategic plans that provide for a safe, healthy, secure, and supportive boarding environment.
- Develop and follow robust policies and procedures in support of boarding, aligned with school policies, and in particular policies that respect culture and diversity, promote equity among enrolled students, and support underserved/vulnerable students, e.g., bullying, racism, and harassment prevention policies.
- Commit to working with First Nations whose students are in boarding including the negotiation and signing of a Local Education Agreement (LEA) if a First Nation requests it.
- Be familiar with the [UN Declaration](#) and the [Declaration Act](#).
- Reflect a commitment to boarding facilities that create environments promoting a sense of emotional, mental and physical well-being.
- Commit to programming that enriches boarding experiences beyond the school day, e.g., evenings and weekends.
- Establish policies and procedures sufficient to ensure prompt, thorough and independent investigation of allegations of staff misconduct.
- Ensure compliance with [CFCSA](#) including requirements in respect of a report to a Ministry of Children and Family Development child welfare worker where they are involved.
- Abide by all Ministry of Children and Family Development and/or police direction when addressing issues of student safety.
- Ensure that plans are in place to address catastrophic risks (e.g., natural and climate disasters) specific to boarding students and facilities.
- Establish a complaint process that is accessible, fair, person-focused and responsive in supporting boarding students.
- Ensure systems exist to protect the security and confidentiality of the personal information of boarding students' and families' information, in accordance with the [Personal Information Protection Act](#).
- Establish and publish fee schedules and maintain a publicly accessible boarding fee refund policy in alignment with the [Independent School Fee Refund Guidelines](#).



More information available from the complaint handing guide:  
<https://bcombudsperson.ca/assets/media/OMB-ComplaintsGuide->

## SECTION 2: INDEPENDENT SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS

### 2.1 Requirements for Independent School Administrators



Independent School Administrators include the B.C. certified independent school head/principal or a member of the school's management team.

To promote the best possible boarding experience for students, in accordance with the Schedule to the Independent School Act and the *Criminal Records Review Act*, independent school administrators must:

- As per the Schedule to the *Independent School Act*, section 1(b), ensure that the boarding facilities comply with applicable legislation and local bylaws of B.C. that pertain to the area in which the facilities are. These include but are not limited to; zoning and land uses, building bylaws, public health and **BC Fire Code compliance**.
- As an employer, for purposes of the *Criminal Records Review Act*, (CRRRA) ensure that every person employed to work in the presence of children and vulnerable adults has signed an Authorization for a Criminal Records Search Form and that the form has been forwarded for processing (*Criminal Records Review Act*, sections 8, 9 and 10). See section 2.3.a of these Guidelines for additional information. In the event there is a finding of risk, act promptly to ensure the employee does not work with boarding students in accordance with **section 11 and 11.1** of the CRRRA.

### 2.2 General Guidelines for Independent School Administrators

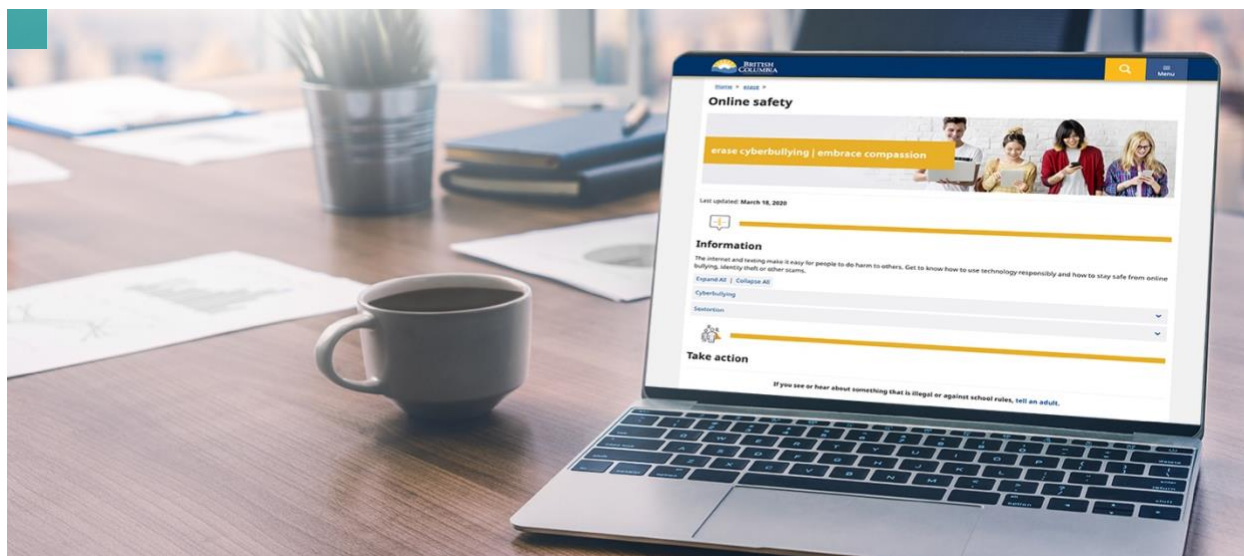
To promote the best possible boarding experience for students, independent school administrators should:

- Maintain current policies and procedures that provide for safe, healthy, secure, and supportive boarding environments, e.g., online safety.
- Ensure health and wellness provisions for boarding students e.g., medical support.
- Ensure routines are clear, well-established and operate consistently to provide an orderly and safe boarding school community.
- Commit to working with First Nations whose students are in boarding which may include following the protocols, expectations and responsibilities set out in the LEA, in cases where there is a signed agreement with a First Nation.
- Be familiar with the **UN Declaration** and *Declaration Act*.

**erase** | EXPECT RESPECT &  
A SAFE EDUCATION

More information available at:  
<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/erase/online-safety>

- Establish policies and procedures to mitigate risks inherent with legal guardianship and/or custodianship of boarding students.
- Implement policies and strategies that promote equity among enrolled students and support vulnerable students, e.g., bullying, racism, and harassment prevention policies.
- Clarify the role of the Safe School Coordinator as it relates to issues arising from student boarding.
- Maintain records management practices that protect confidentiality, integrity and availability of personal information collected from students and staff, in compliance with the *Personal Information Protection Act*, including, but not limited to, records about the following matters:
  - *Child protection allegations and suspicions*
  - *Disputes and complaints.*
  - *Emergency drill.*
  - *Individual boarding student record.*
  - *Medical records, including administration of medication, treatment and first aid, serious illnesses and injuries, parental permission for medical and dental treatment.*
  - *Parental permission and information forms for activities, etc.*
  - *Criminal record and suitability checks on all staff/volunteers that have access to boarding students.*
- Establish clear procedures to respond to breaches of the law (e.g., instances of theft).



## 2.3 Guidelines for Independent School Administrators Relating to Staff



Boarding staff includes any staff member with responsibilities to provide any services to students in the boarding environment.

[ **NOTE:** based on a school's structure and composition, some schools may consider all school staff as boarding staff. Other schools may see a distinction between school staff and boarding staff. ]

The guidelines in this section have been developed specific for staff working with boarders and are in addition to any requirements a school may have for staff generally.

To promote the best possible boarding experience for students, independent school administration should:

- Ensure each staff member who will have contact with boarding students has an assessment of suitability for working with children at time of hiring (references). Staff who do not receive criminal record clearance are to be removed from contact with children and youth (*Criminal Records Review Act, section 11*). Consideration should also be given to requiring criminal record checks for staff's adult family members working or permanently residing in boarding and for volunteers.
- Establish staffing plans sufficient to ensure appropriate student supervision before, during and after school hours.
- Ensure there are adequate numbers of boarding staff with the skills to meet the needs of all boarding students.
- Develop and implement comprehensive policies and procedures regarding boarding staff recruitment, induction, code of conduct and job descriptions. Consider being specific about policies or expectations related to off-duty staff residing at the boarding facility (e.g., visitors, pets, consumption of intoxicants, etc.).
- Maintain up-to-date boarding policies and a staff handbook that conveys information regarding:
  - *Administration of first aid.*
  - *Storage and distribution of boarding student medications.*
  - *Staff members' legal duty of care responsibilities on a 24/7 basis.*
  - *The school's key boarding policies and procedures.*
  - *Appropriate and caring supervision of boarding students.*
  - *Respect the right to privacy of boarding students, and approved procedures for entry to or inspections of their rooms in compliance with the Personal Information Protection Act.*
  - *All emergency protocols.*
- Design orientation and induction activities to ensure staff are knowledgeable about all relevant school policies and procedures related to boarding.



- Inform staff of the following resources:
  - *Reporting Child Abuse in BC* (Tel: 1 800 663 9122) to be called to report when a child or youth under 19 years of age is being abused or neglected.
  - *Kids Help Phone* (Tel: 1 800 668 6868 or text 686868) for counselling and mental health support.
  - *Kelty Mental Health Resource Center* for resources regarding navigating the mental health system, connecting with peer support options, and accessing resources and tools to support wellbeing.
  - *Indigenous Child & Youth Mental Health Services* for links to regional resources.
  - *The erase | Report It tool* for students to send a secure, anonymous and confidential message to the school's safe school coordinator regarding anything worrisome or concerning (e.g., bullying, harassment, discrimination, weapons, threats, etc.).
- Ensure staff are made aware of and are sensitive and respectful to the cultures and backgrounds of all boarding students.
- Implement sound communication protocols for staff to use with boarding students and their parents/guardians, custodians, International/domestic student authorized representatives and First Nations (if applicable).
- Regularly assess the competence of staff.
- Provide for the professional learning of staff.

## 2.4 Guidelines for Independent School Administrators Relating to Boarding Students



Boarding students are students who are both enrolled with and reside (part-time or full-time) in a boarding program in a B.C. certified independent school.

To promote the best possible boarding experience for students, independent school administrators should:

- Ensure appropriate living arrangements, such as age, gender, gender identity and health (e.g., allergies) considerations.
- Establish policies and procedures to ensure that appropriate supports and services are provided to enrolled students with disabilities and diverse abilities.
- Establish rigorous procedures to protect the personal information of boarding students from unauthorized collection, use and disclosure, in compliance with the *Personal Information Protection Act*.
- Establish policies regarding diversity, equity, and inclusion to support social and emotional well-being and needs of all enrolled students.

- Develop detailed plans to address student self-harm in the boarding environment and ensure appropriate linkages and/or communication between parents/guardians, custodians. International/domestic student authorized representatives and staff supporting the boarding student in school and in boarding.
- Maintain current procedures to address risks to student and school safety, including use of **Community Violent Threat Risk Assessments**.
- Inform students of the following resources:
  - *B.C. Helpline for Children (Tel: 310 1234) to be called to report when a child or youth under 19 years of age is being abused or neglected.*
  - *Kids Help Phone (Tel: 1 800 668 6868 or text 686868) for counselling and mental health support*
  - *Kelty Mental Health Resource Center for resources regarding navigating the mental health system, connecting with peer support options, and accessing resources and tools to support wellbeing.*
  - *Indigenous Child & Youth Mental Health Services for links to regional resources.*
  - *The erase | Report It tool for students to send a secure, anonymous and confidential message to the school's safe school coordinator regarding anything worrisome or concerning (e.g., bullying, harassment, discrimination, weapons, threats, etc.).*
- Engage with parents and First Nations to support students having reliable and safe access (i.e. transportation) to the educational facilities from their boarding location and that travel arrangements are in place for students to safely go back to and/or visit home during the school year.
- Ensure appropriate procedures are in place for children and youth in care, including appropriate communications with relevant agencies (e.g. the Ministry of Children and Family Development, Indigenous governing bodies, and delegated Aboriginal Agencies).



## 2.5 Guidelines for Independent School Administrators Relating to Parents/Guardians



Parents/Guardians are a boarding student's parent(s) or legally appointed guardian(s)

[ **NOTE:** *guidelines in this area may also be applicable to any adult designated by the parent to represent the student's interest.* ]

To promote the best possible experience for boarding students, independent school administrators should:

- Ensure ongoing engagement with parents/guardians to enhance the boarding experience.
- Develop and implement sound communication protocols for parents / guardians.
- Consider language barriers for families who may not speak or understand English.
- Establish mechanisms for parents to make staff aware of cultural and family background information.
- Implement complaint procedures that reflect the guiding principles of accessibility, fairness, and person-focused processes which are responsive in supporting boarding students in these complaint situations.

## 2.6 Guidelines for Independent School Administrators Relating to Community and First Nations

To promote the best possible boarding experience for students, independent school administration should:

- Seek to establish, nurture, and maintain connections with First Nations as well parents and caregivers of First Nations, Métis and Inuit students in boarding.
- Develop appropriate protocols and procedures for engaging First Nations on issues related to student well-being, including school attendance, connectedness, and incidences of racism or bullying.<sup>1</sup>
- Develop and implement communication protocols, with local government entities and organizations supporting children.
- In the event of a declared public health emergency (e.g. a pandemic) or public health incident, ensure the operation of the boarding facility is in accordance with guidance provided by the Office of the **Provincial Health Officer**.

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<sup>1</sup> PROTOCOLS, EXPECTATIONS AND RESPONSIBILITIES MAY BE ESTABLISHED THROUGH A LOCAL EDUCATION AGREEMENT.

## 2.7 Guidelines for Independent School Administrators Related to Facilities and Grounds

To promote the best possible boarding experience for students, independent school administrators should:

- Ensure that facilities for boarding students and live-in staff are:
  - *Safe and secure, with 24-hour safety and security measures\*.*
  - *Arranged to offer privacy to both boarding students and live-in staff. In this regard, consider expectations regarding live-in staff's access to facilities when off duty and consider developing separate policies for live-in staff that define privacy expectations.*
  - *Suitable for sleeping.*
  - *Suitable for studying.*
  - *Suitable for meals.*
  - *Equipped with appropriate washing and lavatory facilities.*
  - *Suitably set up to deal with illnesses.*
- Ensure that fire, evacuation, lock down, and related drills are in place and conducted.
- Arrange food services in compliance with [Food Safe BC](#).
- Observe [Canada's Food Guide](#) for the majority of meals and snacks, and consider foods that reflect the taste and cultural preferences of boarding students.

### CAMERA / OVERT VIDEO SURVEILLANCE \*

If using video surveillance, please review the Office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner for B.C.'s **Guidance Document: Using Overt Video Surveillance**. School policies and procedures should align with the guidance provided, including providing individuals with notification, and full disclosure of the purpose, use and retention of the files.



## SECTION 3: BOARDING STAFF



Boarding staff includes any staff member with responsibilities to provide any services to students in the boarding environment.

[ **NOTE:** *based on a school's structure and composition, some schools may consider all school staff as boarding staff. Other schools may see a distinction between school staff and boarding staff.* ]

The guidelines in this section have been developed specific for staff working with boarders and are in addition to any requirements a school may have for staff generally.

To promote the best possible boarding experience for boarding students, staff should:

- Be knowledgeable of and abide by all school policies and procedures.
- Participate in all orientation and induction activities.
- Understand their legal duty of care responsibilities and always provide appropriate and caring supervision.
- Understand and implement all school boarding policies and procedures, with special attention and adherence to all safety protocols.
- Be fully aware of their responsibilities within section 14 of the **Child, Family and Community Services Act (CFCSA)**, which requires a person directly to report to a child welfare worker in the Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD) if the person believes that the child is in need of protection in the situations set out in **section 13 of the CFCSA**.
- Be aware of the following resources:
  - **Reporting Abuse in BC** (Tel: 1 800 663 9122) to be called to report when a child or youth under 19 years of age is being abused or neglected.
  - **Kids Help Phone** (Tel: 1 800 668 6868 or text 686868) for counselling and mental health support.
  - **Kelty Mental Health Resource Center** for resources regarding navigating the mental health system, connecting with peer support options, and accessing resources and tools to support wellbeing.
  - **Indigenous Child & Youth Mental Health Services** for links to regional resources.
  - **The erase | Report It** tool for students to send a secure, anonymous and confidential message to the school's safe school coordinator regarding anything worrisome or concerning (e.g., bullying, harassment, discrimination, weapons, threats, etc.).
- Respect diversity and the cultural and family backgrounds of boarding students.
- Recognize that supporting First Nations, Métis and Inuit students in boarding – and communicating with First Nations and the families of First Nations, Métis and Inuit students may require sensitivity to the far-reaching and traumatic impacts of the residential school system.
- Be mindful of, and respect staff–student boundaries.

- Recognize their role as a model for students and consider their behavior outside of school hours.
- Respect the privacy of boarding students and be aware of the legal requirement to protect personal information from unauthorized collection, use and disclosure.
- Raise any issues regarding boarding students and report any concerns promptly to administrators.



Reporting Child Abuse in BC:

**<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/safety/public-safety/protecting-children/reporting-child-abuse>**

Comprehensive Indian Residential Schools and Reconciliation Resources available at: **<http://www.fnesc.ca/irsr>**

## SECTION 4: BOARDING STUDENTS



Boarding students are students who are both enrolled with and reside (part-time or full-time) in a boarding program in a B.C. certified independent school.

To have the best possible experience, boarding students should:

- Abide by all rules and expectations established by the school.
- Understand that boarding students share responsibility for the success of their experience in boarding and engage in activities offered to enrich the boarding experience.
- Communicate regularly with parents/guardians.
- Be aware of and access the following resources:
  - *B.C. Helpline for Children (Tel: 310 1234) to be called to report when a child or youth under 19 years of age is being abused or neglected.*
  - *Kids Help Phone (Tel: 1 800 668 6868 or text 686868) for counselling and mental health support*
  - *Kelty Mental Health Resource Center for resources regarding navigating the mental health system, connecting with peer support options, and accessing resources and tools to support wellbeing.*
  - *Indigenous Child & Youth Mental Health Services for links to regional resources.*
  - *The **erase | Report It** tool for students to send a secure, anonymous and confidential message to the school's safe school coordinator regarding anything worrisome or concerning (e.g., bullying/cyberbullying,, harassment, racism/discrimination, social media, concerns about adults, weapons, violence, threats, vandalism, etc.).*



- Report any concerns they may have or instances where they may feel unsafe to an appropriate staff member or other trusted adult. If they don't feel they can share with an adult, use the [erase | Report It tool](#).
- Communicate any health/medical concerns to an appropriate staff member.
- Be aware of health information and service resources, including [HealthLink BC](#) and [Immunize BC](#).

**Kids Help Phone** 

Get support with these mental health resources  
- Kids Help Phone

## SECTION 5: PARENTS/GUARDIANS



Parents/Guardians are a boarding student's parent(s) or legally appointed guardian(s)

[ **NOTE:** *guidelines in this area may also be applicable to any adult designated by the parent to represent the student's interest.* ]

To promote the best possible boarding experience for boarding students, parents/guardians should:

- Execute the application and in-take materials truthfully, accurately, and completely disclosing all relevant student information, such as medical conditions, to enable the school to support and care for the student.
- Inform the school of changes to any of the information provided as part of the intake process, at the earliest opportunity.
- Be engaged with the school on an ongoing basis regarding the child's wellbeing and advise staff of any concerns regarding the child's health and wellbeing.
- Be familiar with all policies and rules established for boarding and review the school's expectations with the child.
- Provide ongoing support to the child and remain in contact with them throughout their boarding experience.
- Respond promptly to requests for permission for boarding students to attend school activities.
- Bring concerns to the attention of the school administrators immediately and seek a positive resolution.
- Be aware of immunization resources: [Immunize BC](#).
- Plan for emergency situations in which your child needs to urgently return to your care.

## SECTION 6: INTERNATIONAL / DOMESTIC STUDENT AUTHORIZED REPRESENTATIVES AND CUSTODIANS



Authorized representatives are individuals or companies that assist international and/or domestic students and families in selecting a suitable school in which to board, commonly known as student “agents.”

Custodians are appointed by a child’s parent/guardian, through an international student program’s authorized document, to care for that child. The federal government of Canada requires international students who are minor children to have a custodian while studying in Canada.

To promote the best possible boarding experience for students, authorized representatives of students and custodians should:

- Be familiar with these Guidelines.
- Comply with school admission standards for boarding students.
- Provide support to boarding school administrators, boarding students and their families – particularly regarding communications with the parent/guardian when requested by the boarding program provider.
- Help boarding students understand and abide by all rules established by the school.





# Glossary / Definitions



## FOR THE PURPOSE OF THESE GUIDELINES:

**Better practice benchmarks** — a standard for comparison, recognized as a level of excellence in a specific area. Better practice benchmarks may indicate practices which have been identified as contributing to improved performance. Applying better practice means learning from and through the experience of others.

**Boarding** — refers to a boarding house, boarding facilities and/or boarding provisions and is relevant to accommodation where two or more students live on school property that is administered by a B.C. certified independent school.

**Boarding student/boarder** — Boarding students are students who are both enrolled with and reside (part-time or full-time) in a boarding program in a B.C. certified independent school.

**Boarding program** — is an administrative unit within a B.C. certified independent school. The boarding program administers and supports boarding students.

**Custodian** — is a person who is appointed by a child's parent/guardian, through an international student program's authorized document, to care for that child. International student programs and the Canadian federal government require that international students who are minor children have a custodian while studying in B.C.

**Dormitories** — can refer to facilities that house students.

**Guardian** — as under the B.C. *Family Law Act*, the parent of a child is generally that child's guardian. A guardian has legal responsibilities and rights for that child.

**Homestay** — is a formal arrangement by an international student program, or its designate, to house an international student with an approved family during their course of study. This family and its residence are both commonly referred to as the "homestay."

**International student** — refers to a student from outside Canada who does not meet the Ministry of Education and Child Care's funding eligibility requirements and typically pays international student tuition fees to the school district or independent school. Many international students with the intention of pursuing studies for longer than six months will have to obtain the authorization of the Canadian government to enter Canada.

**International / domestic authorized representative** — refers to an individual who is commonly referred to as an "agent", who is a paid consultant, based in B.C. or abroad and who helps to arrange aspects of an international or domestic student's education, travel or selection of a suitable school in which to board.

**Minor child** — refers to any person below the age of 19 years.

**Parent** — refers to the biological or adoptive parent of a child.

**School connectedness** — is a term used by educators to describe the level of connection that a student feels for their school.

**Stakeholders** — those with authority or interest in boarding in independent schools.



# Duty To Report Concerns That a Child May Be In Need of Protection

**Section 14 of CFCSA** requires that anyone who has reason to believe that a child or youth needs protection, must report the matter to the Ministry of Children and Family Development. For an extensive list of circumstances in which protection is or may be needed, see **section 13 of CFCSA**.

## WHAT TO DO:

- *If a child is in immediate danger, call police (**call 911 or your local police**) to intervene and a child welfare worker should be contacted to determine whether the child is in need of protection.*
- *If you think a **child or youth** under 19 years of age is being abused or neglected, you have the legal duty to report your concern to the Ministry of Children and Family Development. Phone **1 800 663 9122** at any time of the day or night.*

The call to the Ministry of Children and Family Development will be answered by the Provincial Centralized Screening team (PCS). Their primary role is to receive and assess child protection reports and initial requests for the Ministry of Children and Family Development services across B.C., 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

Provincial Centralized Screening can be reached at the following numbers:  
**1 800 663 9122** or **1 604 660 4927**.

## FOR MORE RESOURCE INFORMATION:

- Visit the **Reporting Child Abuse in BC** webpage.
- Refer to the **Duty to Report** pamphlet and poster provide information on reporting concerns about children and youth.
- Learn more in the **Child Abuse Prevention Handbook**.



BRITISH COLUMBIA

# Independent School Boarding Guidelines 2022



BRITISH  
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Ministry of Education  
and Child Care

