

2021

# Joint Educational Planning and Support for Children and Youth in Care

CROSS-MINISTRY GUIDELINES



## Contributions

The cross-ministry project team acknowledges the efforts of many individuals involved in the original development of *Joint Educational Planning and Support for Children and Youth in Care: Cross-Ministry Guidelines (2008)*. Regional and provincial office staff of the Ministry of Children and Family Development and the Ministry of Education, and representatives of the Federation of Independent School Associations, First Nations schools, British Columbia Council of Administrators of Inclusive Support in Education, and the British Columbia Principals' and Vice-Principals' Association collaborated in 2008 to produce provincial-level guidelines that contributed to improved information sharing practices and increased collaborative planning for children and youth in care in British Columbia.

These guidelines were reviewed and updated in 2016/17, in collaborative efforts between the Ministry of Children and Family Development and the Ministry of Education. The revised guidelines were distributed in 2017. The most recent guidelines will be distributed in 2021 and will continue to be reviewed every three years and updated as needed to reflect new directions or changes required due to system transformation efforts made by the Ministry of Education, or relevant policy changes made by the Ministry of Children and Family Development.

The Ministry of Children and Family Development and the Ministry of Education encourage service providers and staff at the local level to meet and explore how these guidelines can be further put into effect through collaborative working relationships.



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## **Territorial Acknowledgment**

The Ministry of Children and Family Development and the Ministry of Education, would like to acknowledge and respect the *lek'wəḡən*, Songhees, Esquimalt and *W̱SÁNEĆ* peoples on whose traditional territories the guidelines were created, and recognizes the breadth of First Nation territories that this document will be accessed in British Columbia.

# 1. Introduction

The health and well-being of children and youth in care is the shared responsibility of many community partners. In addition to family and community involvement, two significant means of support for children and youth in care are the education system and the child welfare system. The Ministry of Education (EDUC), through public and independent schools, and the Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD) are committed to working in collaboration with other ministries to provide consistent and continuous support for children and youth in care in achieving their learning outcomes. These guidelines, which apply to both public and independent schools, draw from existing legislation on the rights of children and youth in care, and on existing standards for educational planning and follow-up within both ministries.

## Rationale

Of the children and youth in care who turned 19 years old in the 2013/2014 fiscal year, 48.1% did so with a high school graduation credential.<sup>1</sup> For youth that turned 19 in the 2019/2020 fiscal year, the percentage increased to 56.2%.<sup>2</sup> Reports from the Representative for Children and Youth (RCY) recommend that EDUC and MCFD focus on further improving the tracking and follow-up of school absences of at risk children and youth, in order to continue to improve the percentage of children and youth in care who hold a high school graduation credential at 19.

Children and youth in care may have medical or developmental issues that can affect their ability to learn. In addition, they may be experiencing emotional difficulties due to stressful events in their lives such as family breakdown, domestic violence, trauma, moving on or off reserve, separation from siblings, or the intergenerational legacy of colonial practices: residential schools, Indian hospitals, the Sixties Scoop and the current over representation of Indigenous children and youth in care. These events and transitions can have significant impacts on these children and youth – on their ability to learn and on their educational outcomes.

Strong benefits are acquired by children and youth in care when those responsible for their care operate as a team and communicate about the child/youth's strengths, talents, needs and educational progress. This communication helps direct the educational program "toward the development of the child/youth's personality, talents and mental and physical abilities to their fullest potential".<sup>3</sup> Therefore, appropriate information sharing among all persons involved, transition planning (pre-transfer and exit), and ongoing collaboration in individual student programming are of critical importance so that the children and youth in care can experience successful school outcomes and community connections.

## Purpose of the guidelines

MCFD and EDUC, in consultation with regional representatives and public and independent school representatives, created these cross-ministry guidelines to improve information sharing, strengthen practice and joint planning, and promote effective communication among teachers, school-based teams, child welfare workers, caregivers and family members.

Specifically, these guidelines are provided to assist school staff, child welfare workers and caregivers in responding to significant transitions for children and youth in care, including changing living arrangements, coming into foster care, or moving to a different school. The guidelines also apply to children and youth in care who have not recently experienced transition, but perhaps experience periods of increased vulnerability and difficulty as they grow and mature. For example, some children and youth in care might be experiencing mental health needs related to trauma they have experienced.

The guidelines focus on the importance of an information-sharing process that can help child welfare workers, school staff and caregivers in their efforts to provide continuity and stability, and to nurture a sense of belonging in educational programming. The goal is to help children and youth in care develop personal resiliency by putting in place the appropriate protective factors (see **6A: Protective Factors**), such as daily attendance, that will position them for greater success in school.

Positive working relationships already exist regionally between many delegated child welfare workers and their education counterparts; these updated guidelines are therefore to support ongoing collaboration and ensure clarity in information sharing practices and planning. To assist child welfare workers, caregivers and school staff in the application of consistent and appropriate information sharing practices, MCFD and EDUC developed **A Guide to Sharing Information about Children and Youth in Care**. This information sharing guide is located in section **7E** of this document and should be referenced prior to sharing information about a child or youth in care. In doing so, the guidelines can help child welfare workers and school staff determine appropriate goals and necessary supports, and monitor ongoing student progress and educational outcomes for children and youth in care.

<sup>1</sup> MCFD Performance Management Report, Volume 6, fiscal 2013/14.

<sup>2</sup> MCFD Modelling, Analysis and Information Management, 2020/21.

<sup>3</sup> UN Convention on the Right of the Child.

## Who are children and youth in care?

Children and youth in care can be any age (up to 19 years) and from any ethnic or socio-economic background. They may come into care with the Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD) or with a Delegated Aboriginal Agency (DAA) for many different reasons and under different legal statuses. As of February 2021, 67.2% of children and youth in care are Indigenous.

The legal status of a child or youth and the legal rights of the parent(s) differ according to the type of Care Agreement or Custody Order. For example:

- Special Needs Agreements and Voluntary Care Agreements provide for day-to-day care of the child or youth with caregiver(s) and allow the parent(s) to retain control over the child/youth's personal information and decision-making regarding the child/youth's health care.
- Custody Orders (Interim, Temporary or Continuing Custody Order) allow the director under the *Child, Family and Community Service Act (CFCSA)* to exercise guardianship responsibilities such as consenting to health care and making necessary decisions about the child/youth's education.

When a child or youth is in care under a *CFCSA* custody order, the director delegates the authority to make decisions pertaining to the health care and education of the child/youth to the child welfare worker, while the caregiver(s) are authorized to provide day-to-day care for the child/youth.

(For more information about the different types of care and custody agreements, see **7D: Care and Custody under the CFCSA**).

The authority to make decisions on a child/youth's daily activities and needs depends on the type of care or custody agreement that is in place. In some cases, the child/youth's caregiver(s) are able to make some decisions; however, depending on the child/youth's legal status, either the parent(s) or the child welfare worker can be the legal guardian and therefore the decision-maker for the child/youth.

The following guidelines apply to all children and youth in care, regardless of their specific legal status, or whether they are enrolled in public or independent schools.



## 2. Guiding Principles

The following principles underpin these guidelines:

- The needs of the child/youth are paramount in all processes and planning.
- Children and youth in care meaningfully participate in making decisions that affect them according to their ability to communicate their views, including their personal hopes and dreams for the future.
- A strengths-based, culturally safe and trauma informed approach is the foundation for support.
- Consistency and stability are of critical importance.
- Whenever possible and appropriate, children and youth in care remain in their current school.
- Information is shared in the best interest of a child/youth within a framework of respect, trust and confidentiality.
- For all children and youth in care, it is imperative that individual cultural heritage and community connections are considered.
- For Indigenous children in care, particular attention must be given to the principles of the *An Act respecting First Nations, Inuit and Métis children, youth and families*: best interests of the child, cultural continuity and substantive equality.
- Children and youth in care with disabilities or diverse abilities (support needs) are active and fully participating members of the inclusive school environment.
- Consultation and collaboration among the people with relevant knowledge related to the child/youth are essential to the development of shared goals and to enhancing learning and improving outcomes.
- Implementing transition plans for children and youth in care takes place in a timely manner.
- Families and children/youth are entitled to timely and appropriate decisions and services that are based on consideration of the child/youth's well-being and that are in their best interests.



### 3. The Guidelines

All children and youth in care benefit when individuals who work with them engage in collaborative planning and appropriate information sharing in order to:

- identify a mutually agreeable process to communicate regularly about student progress and success;
- review the educational component of the Care Plan and Individual Education Plan (IEP) (if applicable), and adjust the educational program plan as necessary;
- discuss observations of the child/youth's adjustment and progress with regard to school life and learning; and
- discuss joint actions that can be taken to support the child/youth if they are not adjusting and meeting their responsibilities as a member of the school community or if they are demonstrating worrisome behaviour.

Collaborative planning and information sharing particularly benefits children and youth in care who experience significant transitions over the course of the school year. Significant transitions can include:

- transferring to a different school;
- changes in living arrangements, including coming into care, a change in a foster placement or returning to live with family or parent(s);
- going on or returning from temporary school breaks such as Spring break and summer holidays;
- changes in the child welfare worker responsible for the child/youth's care; and
- transitioning to post-secondary life and aging out of care.

These transitions can be very stressful and can have potentially major impacts on the child/youth as a learner.

#### Collaborative planning

Joint planning processes that require the ongoing collaboration of child welfare workers, school staff, caregiver(s) and parent(s) will ensure consistent and continuous support for children and youth in care in achieving their learning outcomes, particularly when they are experiencing significant transitions. For Indigenous children in care, collaboration may include representatives from the child's Indigenous community. Collaborative work is the best way to address the multiple and complex needs of children and youth in care. For example, when a child/ youth experiences a transition to a new school district, planned placement will include consultation with a number of individuals: the child welfare worker, staff from the receiving school district such as the school child in care contacts, the caregiver(s), staff from other service agencies involved with the child/youth, and the child/youth according to their abilities (see **6E** for an example of an agreement). Responsibilities are assigned to members of the child/youth's "care team" or "care circle"

including welcoming the child/youth to their new school and assisting the child/youth in developing a sense of belonging (see **6B** for examples of school-based strategies).

**It is of critical importance that there is frequent, open and honest communication among all adults working with the child/youth.** In addition, although the members of the team may come and go, it is essential that the child/youth experience team transitions as seamlessly as possible.

#### Information sharing

Information sharing among child welfare workers, school staff, including school children in care contacts (usually school principals), caregiver(s), parent(s) and other supports/advocates for the child/youth is a part of collaborative planning. While it is essential to use procedures to protect children/youth against the risk of unauthorized access, collection, use or disposal of their personal information, joint planning requires clear and honest discussion about the needs and strengths of the child/youth.

When sharing information about children and youth in care it is important to remember that educators and child welfare workers share a common goal: to maximize each child/youth's learning potential and to ensure their wellness and safety. Where a child welfare worker is the child/youth's guardian, school staff can share with them any information that can be shared with a parent. When participating in school-based planning, child welfare workers can share with school staff the level of information necessary to ensure the child/youth's well-being.

Information can be shared both verbally and in written form. Sharing can include, but is not limited to, relevant information from:

- medical professionals (e.g., child and youth mental health clinician, pediatrician, psychologist, psychiatrist, psychometrist) about conditions that affect the child/youth's learning or attendance;
- the child/youth's MCFD or Delegated Aboriginal Agency file, including relevant education and health information from the Care Plan, and information on any external supports that may affect educational outcomes or student attendance, such as tutors or child or youth care workers;
- school files, including report cards, Individual Education Plan (IEP), school-based assessment reports, and minutes from school-based team meetings.

The means of sharing information to support collaborative planning includes, but is not limited to:

- in-person individual or team meetings;
- teleconferencing or weekly phone calls;
- mid-term updates;
- written information or reports; and
- home visits.

## Roles and responsibilities

An overview of actions to be taken by individuals responsible for the child/youth's care and education during a transition (in school or with living arrangements) is included in the Resource section. For more detail on these individual roles and responsibilities, see the collaborative planning checklists in **6C: Collaborative Planning Checklist: Change in School** and **6D: Collaborative Planning Checklist: Change in Living Arrangement**.

The **child welfare worker, caregiver(s) and/or parent(s)** are responsible for:

- informing school staff of any change in the child/youth's circumstances;
- reviewing the child/youth's strengths and needs with school staff;
- sharing relevant information about the child/youth's experience of trauma to help promote mental wellness and safety;
- sharing relevant information and strategies from the Care Plan developed to address needs;
- attending collaborative planning meetings with the school-based team, including IEP meetings (child welfare worker's responsibility when child/youth is under *CFCSA* custody order);
- discussing with school staff the individualized support and education planning needed to monitor student progress and improve outcomes;
- giving school staff a list of any services provided by MCFD or the Delegated Aboriginal Agency (DAA) to a child/youth, community-based services accessed by the child/youth, and, where known, any school-based services accessed by the child/youth (child welfare worker's responsibility);
- signing release forms for schools to share information needed to enhance planning for the child/youth and ensure their safety and wellness (child welfare worker's responsibility when child/youth under *CFCSA* custody order);
- consulting with school staff to determine needs and provide the child/youth with the necessary materials, clothes and supplies to participate fully in the school program;
- meaningfully engage the child/youth in all planning and decision-making processes, including planning around post-secondary education or career training options and awareness of available supports while they are aging out of care (child welfare worker's responsibility);
- contacting the old and new schools and helping facilitate a smooth transition, when a school move is necessary (child welfare worker's responsibility when child/youth under *CFCSA* custody order); and

- ensuring that the child/youth's school(s) are documented within the CS Case in ICM (Child/Youth Info Tab-Education Applet) (child welfare worker's responsibility).

The following are ultimately the responsibility of the school principal, but can be assigned to other school staff to carry out. School staff includes the principal, teachers, administrators, counsellors, and the child/youth's school contact. **School staff** are responsible for:

- developing and implementing a plan for continuity of services with child welfare workers, parents, caregivers and other supports in order to support the child/youth in:
  - developing or retaining a personal sense of belonging, security and acceptance (e.g., connection to Indigenous support staff and programs, the child's Indigenous community, or other cultural opportunities);
  - meeting the expectations of the educational program,
  - developing social, emotional skills; and
  - achieving their learning outcomes.

When the child/youth is changing schools or starting a new school year, school staff are also responsible for:

- taking time to get to know the child/youth and developing mutual understanding and respect (all school staff);
- introducing the child/youth to the culture of the school (all school staff);
- recognizing the impact of having to adjust to new circumstances and considering the impact of any previous traumatic experiences (all school staff);
- arranging for timely transfer of school records, files and information when necessary (administrative staff);
- conducting a file review and giving the child welfare worker, caregiver(s) and/or parent(s) a list of current school-based services accessed by the child/youth, and where known, MCFD/DAA-provided services or community-based services accessed by the child/youth (school children and youth in care contact, counsellor, principal);
- ensuring attendance policies are followed and enacted promptly and follow up is in place for students who are absent from school for an extended period of time - 2 days or more (teachers, principal);
- assigning a school-based "adult mentor" or school-based case manager for the child/youth (including, where appropriate, an Indigenous family support worker) and advising the child welfare worker, caregiver(s) and/or parent(s) on the role of this person and how to provide support (principal, school children in care contact, counsellor); and
- establishing an ongoing communication plan with the parent(s), caregiver(s) and child welfare worker, as appropriate (principal, teachers, school children in care contact).

The following are ultimately the responsibility of the child welfare worker and the school principal but should be carried out collaboratively with the child welfare worker/caregiver(s)/parent(s), other supports and school staff. All parties are **jointly** responsible for:

- collaborating to provide the supports and/or resources necessary for smooth transitions of any kind;
- collaborating in the development and implementation of the Care Plan to support the child/youth's needs etc.;
- integrating the child/youth's views in planning and decision-making, according to their abilities;
- being trauma aware and integrating trauma informed practice in their everyday work;
- consulting each other regarding the use of positive approaches, policies and strategies, such as restitution or other positive behaviour support and trauma informed practice, in response to such concerns as:
  - school attendance,
  - behaviour,
  - worrisome behaviour, and
  - compliance with the school code of conduct;
- ensuring that all parties receive copies of report cards or other relevant documents that may be useful in planning and monitoring the child/youth's progress and planning for their future success;
- ensuring planning considers whether or not the child/youth has been a subject of a student safety matter and follow up is in place;
- discussing strategies for building relationships and focusing on the child/youth's development of skills, knowledge and a positive attitude with a strong belief in self and others;
- reviewing the child/youth's plan and progress on a regular basis (such as during established school reporting periods) to monitor their progress and amend the Care Plan as needed; and
- documenting all ongoing communications.

EDUC's comprehensive Expect Respect and a Safe Education (ERASE) strategy aims to ensure that every student in BC feels safe, accepted and respected regardless of their race, colour, ancestry, place of origin, religion, physical or mental disability, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression. The strategy encourages personalizing services and supports for students to help prevent, identify and stop harmful behaviours – whether online, at school or in the community. Multidisciplinary training is currently provided to enhance school culture and climate, assess for violence potential, promote positive mental health and well-being, and develop intervention plans for students experiencing vulnerability.

The ERASE strategy also provides guidance for promoting timely and necessary sharing of information to assess worrisome or threatening behaviour and identify appropriate interventions.

## Attendance

EDUC through public and independent schools, along with MCFD, is committed to working together on the shared goal of consistent and continuous support for children/youth in care. One area where this shared responsibility is evident is student attendance. EDUC assists school districts to provide services and supports to all children/youth in care by sharing best practices in attendance management. Every school district/authority should have policies and procedures in place to track and document unexplained absences or withdrawals. District Safe School Coordinators in each school district liaise with EDUC representatives on a regular basis in order to communicate about a broad range of topics that support student wellness and safety and promote sharing best practices.

Strengthening the ability of the school system to support and monitor attendance is very important for students who lack more traditional family support networks.

Best practices to support attendance:

- Sharing information about attendance/absences is prompt and occurs at the school level where early intervention can occur and school connectedness can be fostered.
- Notices about student attendance/absences are provided to contacts such as caregivers and/or child welfare workers, and if the student is away for an approved extended period of time, or for an unexplained absence, the school/district follows up with MCFD.
- Caregivers and/or other contacts work with schools to ensure that both planned or unexpected absences are reported promptly to the school to help ensure student safety.

## Useful tools and resources include:

- Tips for school-based teams, teachers, caregivers, student engagement, and child welfare workers in **6F, 6G, 6H, 6I, 6J, 6K**;
- *Permanent Student Record* (Form 1704) with inclusions (e.g., recent report cards, and/or Individual Education Plans);
- counselling, learning assistance/resources, tutors, and extra-curricular interests, including school clubs or sports;
- school agenda, home and school communication book, weekly phone call, email, fax;
- home visits; and
- [Aged-Out.com](http://Aged-Out.com) is an up-to-date warehouse of information on resources and services available to young adults and a learning tool to help people feel empowered as they leave care.

## Additional strategies for all parties to consider

- Coordinate so that the caregiver(s) have specific strategies to reinforce school-related tasks at home and the school knows the specific strategies being used in the home and/or community (e.g., homework requirements, school trip policies, and leisure activities in the community).
- Provide regular ongoing communication to build positive relationships.
- Schedule quarterly consultation between MCFD or Delegated Aboriginal Agencies' staff and the school principal to monitor the child/youth's progress.

## 4. Collaborative Planning: A Case Study

The following hypothetical case involves a family who accesses a range of services. It illustrates some of the actions and responsibilities previously listed in these guidelines, and the possible flow of inter-agency planning and collaboration.

### Aiden

Six-year-old Aiden expresses a strong desire to learn to read, a wonderful sense of humour, and love for his family. However, he experiences extreme behaviour difficulties. He refuses to co-operate with his mother and often goes on the attack with the intent to physically hurt his infant sibling. Aiden also demonstrates significant delay in acquisition of pre-reading skills (he does not yet know the alphabet) and is unable to communicate his feelings in the classroom and persistently physically acts out. He experiences frustration so intensely that he has emotional breakdowns involving screaming, kicking (often putting holes in walls and bruising people in close proximity) and foul language, necessitating significant interventions to help him stabilize.

Towards the end of Aiden's year in Grade 1, his mother, Meena, who has bipolar disorder and shows extreme frustration and inability to cope, moved the family to a new community to be closer to her brother, Jay. Meena has entered into a Voluntary Care Agreement for Aiden under the *CFCSA* so that he can be cared for, her infant son can be safe and she can focus on stabilizing her own mental health.

Aiden was referred for assessment at the Complex Developmental and Behavioural Conditions clinic in his area, which will assess him for possible Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD).

One strategy for supporting Aiden is to emphasize information sharing and collaboration among all the adults caring for and working with him. Aiden's care team now includes:

- those who are working together to implement a supportive living environment in the new community, including:
  - Aiden's biological mother and uncle;
  - his caregivers (foster mother and father); and
  - the child welfare worker;

- those who are working together to implement a supportive school and learning environment, including:
  - the classroom teacher;
  - the learning supports teacher;
  - a school-based champion (the school librarian has agreed to develop a friendly, trusting relationship with Aiden);
  - the school principal; and
  - the educational assistant.

In addition to the home and school care team members listed there is a role for the staff of the Complex Development and Behavioural Conditions Clinic following Aiden's assessment. This includes, for example, inviting the child welfare worker, caregivers and school staff to a meeting to discuss recommendations for behavioural strategies to be used both at school and in the home by members of Aiden's care team.

As a result of his family's move to a new community, Aiden is beginning Grade 2 at a new school. Aiden's new caregivers registered him in the new school for the fall. His child welfare worker has facilitated meetings with the caregivers and the school. Staff of the new school have connected with Aiden's old school for the timely transfer of records and to gain insight into Aiden's strengths and needs. In order to maintain continuity, the librarian at the new school has agreed to take on the role of Aiden's school-based champion.

### Discussion

As is the case for all children and youth in care, Aiden's care team is responsible for informing the new school as to the custody arrangements, contact information, and specific strengths and needs of the child/youth who is new to the school. **The school is responsible for orienting the parent(s)/guardian(s), caregiver(s) and child/youth to their community, and for making sure that all relevant records are requested.** The principal can ensure timely information sharing and transition planning by calling the previous school and talking to staff involved with the child/youth to identify strengths, likes and dislikes, and needs for support and programming.

A change in caregiver(s), child welfare worker and/or the process of registration in a new school represents the beginning of a new relationship. When caregivers meet with school staff and are present in school life, the resulting interactions and communication significantly impact the child/youth. When there is a good relationship between the school and the child/youth's caregivers, information about the child/youth's sense of belonging and adjustment to their social and learning environment can be monitored and their needs can be addressed in an ongoing, positive and timely manner.

## One year later

Aiden spent the year with alternate caregivers and is now seven years old. His reading proficiency is approaching grade-level and he has learned coping strategies so that he can communicate more effectively and control his outbursts at school. He has developed a trusting relationship with the school librarian.

However, after having Aiden spend the school year with alternate caregivers through a Voluntary Care Agreement, and then having Aiden live at home for the summer, Meena realized that she cannot cope. Over the summer, Aiden's behaviour once again became violent and Meena's illness had not been stabilized. The delegated child welfare worker determined that Aiden's younger brother was now in danger of physical harm as the home situation escalated.

The child welfare worker ended the Voluntary Care Agreement and, after all other options had been explored, Aiden came into care through a court process that eventually led to a Continuing Custody Order. Arrangements were made to maintain his placement at his current school for Grade 3. School staff requested another referral for a behavioural assessment and continuation of his counselling therapy.

Aiden now has a new child welfare worker and new caregivers. The child welfare worker and caregivers are responsible for updating the school as to the change in Aiden's living arrangements and the traumatic transition Aiden has experienced (i.e., his perception of the permanent loss of his mother and brother).

The school is responsible for welcoming Aiden's new caregivers and providing them with a means for input into educational planning for him. The school-based team may consult with the Provincial Outreach Program for FASD in the development of Aiden's IEP and strategies to support him.

Aiden still enjoys spending time with his Uncle Jay. The child welfare worker advises the school that having Meena's brother Jay available offers a steady connection with family, is a protective factor for Aiden, and provides him with a sense of continuity and comfort through his time of loss.

Aiden's school-based champion has invited him to continue helping her tidy up tables and chairs after school one day a week, giving them a chance to have some one-on-one time to talk about the books he is reading and how he is doing in school. The child welfare worker has facilitated an arrangement with the school and caregivers for Uncle Jay to pick Aiden up on Thursdays after his visit to the school library.

Aiden often talks about sports with his school-based champion, and the school has paired Aiden with an older student who is an excellent basketball player, in order for him to have a positive role model and to build on his interest in sports. They will play basketball together during the lunch hour at least once a week.



## 5. Glossary of Common Terms

A number of the terms used in these guidelines have specific meanings depending on the context of either the child welfare system or the educational system. These terms are defined below to help ensure clarity and to support a collaborative response to educational planning for children and youth in care among education partners.

**Adult Dogwood:** the BC Adult Graduation Diploma. In the Adult Graduation Program, 20 credits are needed for graduation. This is different from the regular graduation program, which requires 80 credits for graduation. To be eligible for the Adult Dogwood, students must be at least 18 years of age, and must take at least three of their courses leading towards graduation as an adult. Information about this option for graduation is available at: <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/education-training/adult-education/graduate-high-school/bc-adult-graduation-diploma-program?keyword=adult&keyword=graduation>.

**Indigenous Education Programs and Services:** include Indigenous language and culture programs, Indigenous support services, and other Ministry of Education approved Indigenous programs. (For more information, see the instructions on Form 1701).

**adult mentor/champion:** a person who takes a friendly interest in the child/youth. The role of the mentor is to provide positive reinforcement, a nurturing and friendly attitude, a source of acceptance and sense of belonging, and encouragement to try new activities and take on challenges, and to focus on pride and respect. This individual interacts regularly with the child/youth, demonstrates interest in their accomplishments and needs, and talks with relevant school staff about any concerns.

**An Act: respecting First Nations, Inuit and Métis children, youth and families** (the Federal Act): sets out national standards for the provision of CFCSA services in relation to Indigenous children/youth both on and off reserve (Sections 9-17). Where there is conflict or inconsistency with the national standards under the Federal Act and the CFCSA, the national standards prevail, changing both the director's obligations and factors the court must consider in relation to Indigenous children/youth.

**attachment:** a sense of connectedness and belonging with significant adults and peers. Attachment is built on the desire for inclusion and affection from others. Research indicates that the attachment relationship with a significant adult is the foundation for subsequent learning about relationships, including with siblings, peers, teachers and lifelong partners. Children/youth with secure attachments are more adaptable, independent and emotionally expressive. It is within the context of secure attachments that children/youth have the opportunity to experience:

- security – an assurance of protection and safety
- self-esteem – the need to value oneself
- autonomy – the need to be self-determining, to have some freedom
- belonging – the need to love and be loved and accepted. A sense of belonging is connected to being accepted for one's cultural and traditional heritage.

**bonding:** the concern and love for the child/youth by the parent, and for the parent by the child/youth. Bonding is the emotional connection between the child/youth and parent and is the foundation for attachment, which involves friendship and trust based on commitment.

It is important to recognize that parenting in the Indigenous community likely includes extended family and community members who support the development of their Indigenous children and youth; e.g. aunts, Elders, elected and hereditary Chiefs, Nations, Band Councils, as well as nurses and support workers.

**caregiver (MCFD/Delegated Aboriginal Agency):** a person with whom a child/youth is placed by a director under the CFCSA and who, by agreement with the director, has assumed responsibility for the child/youth's day-to-day care (e.g., a foster caregiver).

**Care Plan:** an action-based planning tool for children and youth in care that is used to identify specific developmental objectives based on continuous assessments of the child/youth's evolving needs and the outcomes of previous decisions and actions. Care plans are completed by the child/youth's child welfare worker with the involvement of the child/youth, their family and extended family, the caregiver(s), service providers, other significant people in the child/youth's life, and the Indigenous community if the child/youth is Indigenous.

**care provider (MCFD/Delegated Aboriginal Agency):** a person who cares for a child/youth under one of the "out-of-care" living arrangements available under the CFCSA, including Sections 8, 35(2)(d) and 41(1)(b).

**care team or care circle:** not a program or a type of service. Rather, it is a process of collaborative inter-agency teaming which is focused on improving the lives of children, youth and families who have multiple, complex needs. As such, the care team or care circle is a vehicle for integrated case management.

**case manager/school-based case manager:** leads a collaborative process that assesses, plans, implements, coordinates, monitors and evaluates the options and services required to meet the needs of a child or youth in care. Case management is characterized by advocacy, communication and resource management, and promotes quality and effective interventions and outcomes.

**child:** a person under 19 years of age; includes a youth.

**Child, Family and Community Service Act (CFCSA):** is the legislative authority to provide child welfare services in BC. Under *the Act*, the Minister designates directors, who in turn delegate the provision of child welfare services to child welfare workers who work for either the Ministry of Children and Family Development or Delegated Aboriginal Agencies.

**child or youth in care:** a child or youth who is in the custody, care or guardianship of a director. (See **Appendix 7D:** Care and Custody under the *CFCSA*). When a child or youth is in permanent care, the director becomes sole guardian and guardianship responsibilities are assumed by a delegated child welfare worker.

**collaboration:** an interactive process in which a number of people with particular expertise come together as equals to generate an appropriate program or process, or find solutions to problems.

**culture:** the customary beliefs, perspectives, values, social norms, practices, languages and histories that collectively distinguishes one group of people from another. The elements of culture are interconnected and are often passed from generation to generation of a particular group of people.

**cultural safety:** promoting a safe environment where the unique history of Indigenous peoples is recognized and respected in order to provide appropriate support and care services in a equitable and safe way, without discrimination.

**Delegated Aboriginal Agency (delegated Aboriginal child and family service agency):** an organization that provides culturally appropriate services for Indigenous children and families, and whose child welfare workers have delegated authority under the *Child, Family and Community Service Act* to provide child welfare services, including responses to suspected child abuse and neglect.

**delegated child welfare worker:** a person delegated under the *CFCSA* to provide child welfare services, including responses to suspected child abuse and neglect.

**director:** a person designated by the Minister of Children and Family Development under the *Child, Family and Community Service Act*. The director may delegate any or all of their powers, duties and responsibilities under *the Act*.

**educational program:** learning activities designed to enable learners to become literate, to develop their individual potential and to acquire the knowledge, skills and attitudes needed to contribute to a healthy society.

**formal supports:** resources within or outside the community that obtain their funding through either public (provincial or federal government) or private sources for specific, agreed-upon purposes. Formal supports provide individuals within and across all communities with professional public and private services in many domains, including health, education and emergency public services.

**Graduation Certificate:** there are two different graduation programs that lead to a graduation certificate from the Kindergarten to Grade 12 system in BC:

- Certificate of Graduation (Dogwood Diploma): Secondary school graduation for most students in BC comes after acquiring 80 credits.
- Adult Graduation Diploma: (Adult Dogwood) Learners who are 18 years of age or older can combine credits earned at both secondary and post-secondary schools towards either a BC Adult Graduation Diploma or a regular BC Dogwood Diploma.

**Note:** *The School Completion (Evergreen) Certificate* is **not** a graduation credential. See “School Completion (Evergreen) Certificate”.

**Indigenous ancestry (student of):** for the purposes of Ministry of Education Indigenous Targeted Education Funding, a school-age student who has self-identified as being of Indigenous ancestry (First Nations, status, or non-status; Métis; or Inuit). Indigenous identification must be made on a voluntary basis.

**Indigenous child:** defined in the *Child, Family and Community Service Act (CFCSA)* as a child:

- who is registered under the *Indian Act* (Canada);
- who has a biological parent who is registered under the *Indian Act* (Canada);
- who is a Nisga’a child;
- who is under 12 years of age and has a biological parent who:
  - is of Indigenous ancestry, and
  - considers them to be Indigenous; or
- who is 12 years of age or over, of Indigenous ancestry, and considers himself or herself to be Indigenous.

**Indigenous community:** for the purposes of these guidelines, “Indigenous community” is one to which the child/youth has a connection through culture, heritage or descent. It includes the community or communities with which the child/youth identifies and/or the Indigenous communities that identify with a specific child/youth.

**Individual Education Plan (IEP):** an IEP is a documented plan that summarizes and records the individual student’s strengths, needs and supports required to access learning. The IEP includes documentation that supports the classroom teacher to plan for the student’s learning. Individualized planning is a continuous and integrated process of instruction, assessment, evaluation, decision-making and reporting. The requirements for an IEP are legislated. IEP development is undertaken by a school-based team in consultation with the parent(s) and/or caregiver(s) and student when appropriate.

**informal supports:** natural resources or “helpers” within the community that are not typically funded by government and that are part of or result from available resources and capacities within the community (e.g., Scout leader, coach, etc.).

**internal assets/external assets:** internal assets are those factors within the young person that shape and affect their ability to trust, grow and learn. External assets are provided by the family, school and community. Young people develop positive habits, attitudes and a worldview that influence lifelong behaviour in response to external assets, such as family support and belonging/ usefulness, and a feeling of personal relevance and importance in the community.

**interventions:** practices, plans, strategies and support(s) that facilitate learning and address a child/youth’s needs.

**Kith and Kin Agreement (CFCSA, s. 8):** an “out-of-care” alternative to MCFD or Delegated Aboriginal Agency guardianship. A director may make a written agreement with a person who (a) has established a relationship with a child/youth or has cultural or traditional responsibility toward a child/youth; and (b) is given care of the child/youth by the parent. The agreement may provide for the worker to contribute to the child/youth’s support while the child/youth is in the person’s care. These agreements are also referred to as “Kin and Other Agreements.”

**meaningful participation:** children/youth participate in an inclusive environment that recognizes and nurtures their strengths, interests, and abilities by fully involving them in decisions that affect them.

**Plan for Independence:** a plan for a youth who is going to be transitioning out of care at the age of 19.

**protective factors:** the determinants and/or conditions present in the individual or family/community that enhance resiliency and serve to decrease the chance that a child/youth will engage in risky behaviours. Risk factors and protective factors are often organized into five categories: individual, family, school, peer group and community.

**resiliency:** a human ability to recover quickly from disruptive change or misfortune without being overwhelmed or acting in dysfunctional or harmful ways. The notion of resiliency arises out of studies on vulnerability. It is known that resiliency develops even when there are adverse circumstances and multiple risk factors; therefore, this area of study approaches child development from the point of view of addressing vulnerability by fostering strengths. These strengths change over time, and are enhanced by protective factors in the individual, family, community and environment.

**school-age:** a person between the age of five by December 31 of the current calendar year, and 19 on or after July 1 of the current school year.

**school-based team:** an ongoing team that can include the child welfare worker, caregiver(s), family members, and school-based personnel. A school-based team functions as a problem-solving group to assist classroom teachers in developing and implementing instructional and management strategies, and to coordinate supports and services for students within the school.

**School Completion (Evergreen) Certificate:** recognizes the achievements of students with disabilities or diverse abilities who have succeeded in meeting the goals of their educational program that are other than standard graduation requirements. This certificate is not a graduation credential. Transcripts are issued showing all successfully completed credit and non-credit Grade 10–12 courses. School Completion Certificates can be awarded upon finishing school in June or at another point in the school year. Information about this program and procedures for reporting and generating an official transcript is available at:

<http://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/education-training/k-12/support/school-completion-certificate-program>.

**school personnel:** refers to all authorized staff employed by the school district, francophone education authority, or independent school authority, including teachers; principals, superintendents and other administrators; counsellors; and, school-based social workers.

**significant adult:** an adult who engages in a caring, supportive and long-term relationship with a child/youth.

**support needs (MCFD/Delegated Aboriginal Agency):** child/youth with support needs has documented significant impairment associated with an ongoing physical, cognitive, communicative and/or emotional/behavioural condition that requires specialized care and support. One criterion for making a Special Needs Agreement (SNA) is that the child/youth has support needs.

**Students with disabilities or diverse abilities (EDUC):** in BC public and independent schools, students with disabilities or diverse abilities means a student who has an impairment of an intellectual, neurodevelopmental, psychological, physical, sensory, emotional, and/or behavioural nature, and/or has exceptional gifts or talents, and who may have support needs in the one or more domain area(s): Cognitive, Independent Living and Self Determination, Communication, Social/Emotional, Auditory and/or Visual.

**stability and continuity of lifelong relationships:** the basic need in all children/youth for continued or new relationships with family and significant people in their lives, including extended family and community connections. Children/youth who have this need met have an increased potential for developing meaningful relationships with others into adulthood. This includes relationships with parents, siblings, extended family, friends, caregivers and others who have a connection to the child/youth through family, culture, faith, identity or community.

Stability and continuity of lifelong relationships is a primary consideration in planning and providing services for children and youth. All services should promote stability and continuity of lifelong relationships by:

- promoting and facilitating regular ongoing contact with those significant to the child/youth;
- maintaining or, where required, developing enduring and stable living arrangements for the child/youth as quickly as possible;
- minimizing disruption of caregivers or care providers; and
- fitting services to meet the child/youth's age, developmental level, and sense of time.

**transition:** the passage of a child/youth from one environment to another. It can be expected at key points in the child/youth's development from childhood to adulthood.

**transition planning:** the preparation, implementation and evaluation required to enable children and youth in care to make major transitions during their lives (e.g., from home or pre-school to school; from class to class; from school to school; from school to post-secondary education, community or work situations; from home to alternative care arrangements; and at age 19, leaving care to live in the community).

**trauma informed practice:** involves understanding how past and current experience of trauma affects children and youth in care to avoid re-traumatization by creating a safe environment to promote healing. This practice includes creating opportunities for children and youth in care to rebuild their sense of control, connection and empowerment.

**visibility in the community:** the amount of contact a child/youth has with community members, including family members, neighbours, schools, public health nurses, agencies, and others who are aware of the presence of a child/youth in that community and who have an interest in their safety and well-being.

**vulnerable (at-risk) child/youth:** a child/youth who is situated such that they could be:

- physically or emotionally hurt, and/or
- easily influenced or tempted into self-destructive actions, and/or
- susceptible to failure and loss of self-esteem.

**youth agreement:** an agreement between a youth 16–18 years of age and MCFD or a Delegated Aboriginal Agency. The youth is not in care and the parent(s) remains the guardian. Youth agreements provide residential, educational or other support services, and financial assistance through a Plan for Independence that could include finding a safe place to live, having basic living and health needs met, getting reconnected with school and/or family, job readiness training, and addictions and mental health treatment.

**youth:** a person who is 16 years of age or over, but under 19 years of age.

## 6. Resources for the Child/Youth's Care Team

The remainder of this document provides tools and resources for the child/youth's care team in its work to share information, plan collaboratively, and monitor the child/youth's educational progress:

**6A: Protective Factors**

**6B: Examples of Strategies to Support Children and Youth in Care in the School Environment**  
– Quick Reference for School Staff

**6C: Collaborative Planning Checklist: Change in School**

**6D: Collaborative Planning Checklist: Change in Living Arrangement**

**6E: Sample: Out-of-District School Placement**

**6F: Tips for School-Based Teams**

**6G: Tips for Teachers**

**6H: Tips for Caregivers**

**6I: Tips for Student Engagement**

**6J: Tips for Child Welfare Workers**

**6K: Signing Permission Forms for Routine School Activities**

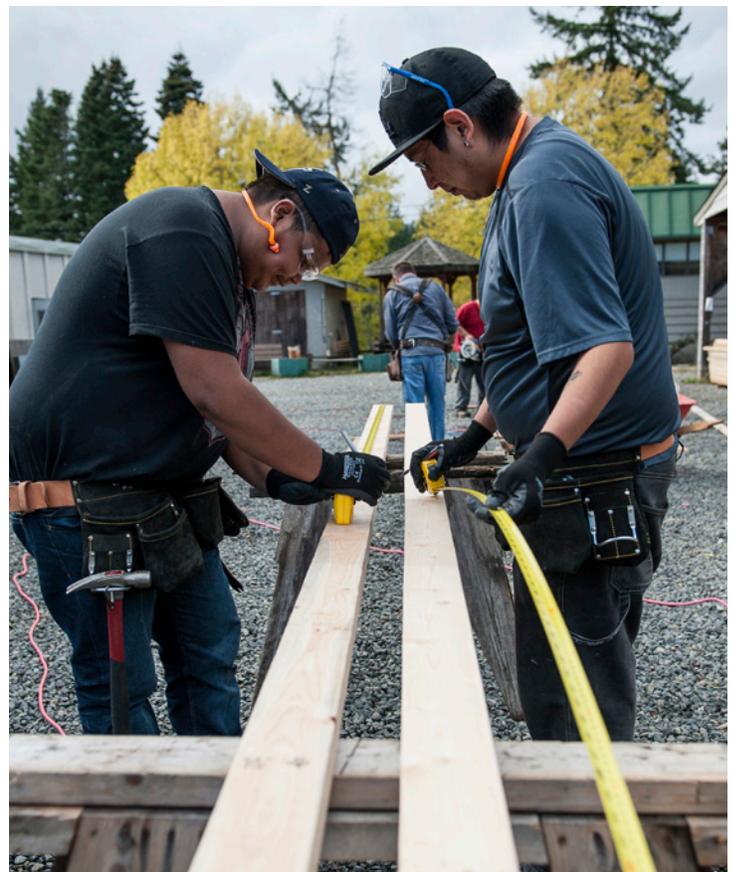


## 6A: Protective Factors

Protective factors are those supports and actions that position children/youth for success in school and the community. The following table outlines some examples of information sharing that will enhance protective factors.

Role of caregiver(s), child welfare worker(s), family member(s)	Role of principal/vice-principal, classroom teacher(s), school-based case manager, counsellors
<b>Protective Factor: Interest and involvement in education and community life</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participate in school-based team transition meetings and parent-teacher meetings, and be involved in school life.</li> <li>• Foster participation in the community (Little League, Big Brothers/Sisters, etc.).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consult with caregiver(s)/child welfare worker(s) about the educational needs and program of the child/youth (e.g., appropriate program and placement).</li> <li>• Encourage all parent(s)/guardian(s) to engage in the planning process (e.g., those who may be or appear to be hesitant or upset).</li> <li>• Match interests and talents to opportunities within the school and community (extra-curricular activities and clubs).</li> </ul>
<b>Protective Factor: Awareness of the child/youth's specific developmental, cultural, and individual strengths and needs</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide pertinent information that is unique to the child/youth's needs, interests, and strengths when discussing educational programming.</li> <li>• Provide opportunities for the child/youth to continue to be connected to their individual culture and community.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Liaise with the sending/receiving school (as per the Permanent Student Record – Form 1704).</li> <li>• Establish a plan to meet the short-term needs for belonging and acceptance, and the long-term need to support educational outcomes; this may include development of an IEP and/or participation in Indigenous language or cultural programs as appropriate. (See <b>Appendix I</b> for suggested interventions and strategies.)</li> </ul>
<b>Protective Factor: Joint assessment and planning for children's/youth's needs and shared accountability among caregivers, family members and relevant support professionals</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Child welfare worker shares relevant aspects of the Care Plan to align school-based collaborative planning with the broad goals for the child/youth's future.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish clear timelines for review and/or revision of goals and strategies.</li> <li>• Focus discussion at scheduled parent/teacher interviews on aligned school-based collaborative plans, and review IEP if applicable.</li> <li>• Consider alternative pathways to graduation for youth when all other strategies have been attempted.</li> </ul>

Role of caregiver(s), child welfare worker(s), family member(s)	Role of principal/vice-principal, classroom teacher(s), school-based case manager, counsellors
<b>Protective Factor: Timely sharing of records</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Share information from relevant reports relating to the well-being of the child/youth.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Share report cards and concerns with caregiver(s).</li> <li>• Conduct appropriate school-based assessment and reporting</li> </ul>
<b>Protective Factor: Consistency and stability</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maintain positive ongoing communication with the school-based team and the child/youth.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Appoint an adult mentor/champion to check in frequently with the child/youth and advocate for their needs and participation in and enjoyment of school life.</li> </ul>
<b>Protective Factor: Development of Resiliency</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Model optimism and hardiness when difficulties arise, and state belief in the child/youth's future.</li> <li>• Ensure that the child/youth knows the adult is aware of their strengths and gifts, and convey to the child/youth through consistent positive feedback their importance in relationships.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Help the child/youth recognize and evaluate their automatic thoughts, help to explain the occurrence of events, "decatastrophize" circumstances, and provide opportunities for control over events (e.g., input into rules and discussion about consequences, opportunities to master skills and knowledge).</li> <li>• Teachers help students view themselves in a positive light by providing "quiet availability, fundamental positive regard and simple sustained kindness" (Higgins, 1994).</li> </ul>



## 6B: Examples of Strategies to Support Children and Youth in Care in the School Environment – Quick Reference for School Staff

Elementary (K–7)	Middle School/Secondary School (6–12)
<p><b>Affective Domain</b> – building trust and belonging (e.g., promoting friendships, visibility/engagement):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide time for other children to get to know the new student; consider partnering the student with a new special buddy each day for a week so they get to know a variety of children and so that the welcoming process is a shared responsibility in the class.</li> <li>• Arrange some one-to-one time for the teacher and new student so that the teacher can establish rapport.</li> <li>• Arrange time for the teacher to welcome the student’s caregiver(s) to the classroom community.</li> <li>• Talk to the new student about opportunities to join in at the school level (school clubs, sports and helper jobs).</li> <li>• Assign another staff member (teacher of the same grade or next grade, learning assistance/special education teacher, principal/vice principal, school counsellor, etc.) to get to know the student and provide contact every day.</li> <li>• Provide the new student’s caregiver(s) with information about community organizations that other children in the school are involved in (e.g., soccer league, Girl Guides, Scouts, SPCA, etc.).</li> <li>• Help the student focus on the positive elements of their life and understand that change is normal and not necessarily a result of any action of the child. It may be that the adult(s) could not cope or needed change for reasons unrelated to the child.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Affective Domain</b> – building trust and belonging (e.g., promoting friendships, visibility/engagement):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide time for other students to get to know the new student; consider striking a “welcome committee” whose members could include older students, student council representatives and/or mentor students placed in the same classes with the new student; the purpose is for the new student to get to know a variety of people and for the welcoming process to be a shared responsibility in the school community.</li> <li>• Arrange some one-to-one time for the teachers and new student so that all can establish rapport.</li> <li>• Talk to the new student about opportunities to join in at the school level (school clubs, sports and helper jobs).</li> <li>• Assign another staff member as an adult champion (teacher of the same grade or next grade, learning assistance/special education teacher, principal/vice principal, school counsellor, etc.) to get to know the student and provide a contact every day.</li> <li>• Provide the new student’s caregiver(s) with information about community organizations that other children/youth in the school are involved in (e.g., soccer league, Girl Guides, Scouts, SPCA, etc.).</li> <li>• Help the child/youth focus on the positive elements of their life and understand that change is normal and not necessarily a result of any action of the child/youth. It may be that the adult(s) could not cope or needed change for reasons unrelated to the child/youth.</li> </ul>



Elementary (K–7)	Middle School/Secondary School (6–12)
<p><b>Intellectual Domain</b> – ensuring appropriate teaching/learning opportunities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complete a file review to establish learning strengths and needs; ask the student to state their own strengths and identify an area for further development.</li> <li>• Speak to the child welfare worker and caregiver(s) about the student’s strengths, needs and challenges.</li> <li>• Ensure continuity of programming when the student has accessed specialized school level services such as learning assistance, ELL, counselling, gifted programs, and Indigenous language and culture programs.</li> <li>• Communicate with the student about how they are doing after a period (two to three weeks) of adjustment; this could take the form of an interim report or a simple interview to affirm the student’s efforts and focus on the ongoing goals for them.</li> <li>• Consider restitution principles (<a href="http://www.realrestitution.com">www.realrestitution.com</a>) and/or culturally sensitive/relevant practices to address negative behaviours rather than school suspension.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Intellectual Domain</b> – ensuring appropriate teaching/learning opportunities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complete a file review to establish learning strengths and needs; ask the student to state their own strengths and identify an area for further development.</li> <li>• Speak to the child welfare worker and foster family about the student’s strengths, needs and challenges.</li> <li>• Ensure continuity of programming when the student has accessed school level supports or services such as learning assistance, ELL, counselling, gifted programs, and Indigenous language and culture programs.</li> <li>• Communicate with the student about how they are doing after a period (two to three weeks) of adjustment; this could take the form of an interim report or a simple interview to affirm the student’s efforts and focus on the ongoing goals for them.</li> <li>• Ensure that the student knows their options with respect to graduation – BC public schools offer program completion in a variety of ways: online learning, dual credit programming and a range of electives including career development and trades training.</li> <li>• Consider disciplinary measures such as restitution principles (<a href="http://www.realrestitution.com">www.realrestitution.com</a>) and/or culturally sensitive/relevant practices to address negative behaviours (e.g., non-attendance), rather than school suspension.</li> </ul>

Elementary (K–7)	Middle School/Secondary School (6–12)
<p><b>Graduation: N/A</b></p>	<p><b>Graduation:</b></p> <p>The student may have gaps in course completion and may need to know about future options for graduation. This information and planning ahead will help the student to maintain optimism and have concrete plans about their future.</p> <p>Students begin working on their graduation requirements in Grade 10. In order to graduate, they must complete specified courses and write three graduation assessments. Students have choice and flexibility in how they meet the remaining requirements. All students must demonstrate they have met the following requirements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community Connections – participate in at least 30 hours of work experience and/or community service and describe what was learned.</li> <li>• Career and Life – complete a transition plan and present significant accomplishments.</li> </ul> <p>Adult students (18 years and older) may finish the courses necessary for receiving their BC Certificate of Graduation or may work towards the BC Adult Graduation Diploma. Courses are available tuition-free for all non-graduated adults through adult learning centres in school districts. Adult students may also take Adult Basic Education (ABE) courses at colleges but there will be a tuition charge. However, in the college system, some grants may be available. More information can be found on adult upgrading grants at: <a href="https://studentaidbc.ca/explore/grants-scholarships">https://studentaidbc.ca/explore/grants-scholarships</a>.</p> <p>In the adult program, 20 credits are needed for graduation. This is different from the regular graduation program, which requires 80 credits for graduation. To be eligible for the Adult Dogwood, the student must be at least 18 years of age, and must take at least three of their courses leading towards graduation as an adult.</p> <p>All students receiving the School Completion Certificate will be issued transcripts showing all successfully completed credit and non-credit Grade 10–12 courses. Information on this can be found at: <a href="https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/education-training/k-12/administration/program-management/graduation">https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/education-training/k-12/administration/program-management/graduation</a>.</p> <p>Further information on graduation requirements are available at: <a href="https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/education-training/k-12/administration/program-management/graduation?keyword=graduation">https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/education-training/k-12/administration/program-management/graduation?keyword=graduation</a>.</p> <p>On-line Learning: Students in Grades 10–12 can take one or all of their courses through on-line learning. Information is available at the LearnNowBC website: <a href="http://www.learnnowbc.ca/">http://www.learnnowbc.ca/</a>.</p>

## 6C: Collaborative Planning Checklist: Change in School

The checklists in **6C** and **6D** outline the roles and responsibilities recommended to enhance information sharing and planning for children and youth in care who are experiencing a transition:

- **6C:** transition to a different school.

Checklist for Collaborative Planning When a Child or Youth in Care Changes Schools			
Team Member(s)	Required Actions	✓	Comments
<b>Child welfare worker</b>	Inform the principal (or designate) and appropriate school staff at the receiving school of the incoming child/youth's circumstances and individual needs.		
<b>Child welfare worker and caregiver(s)</b>	Work collaboratively with the sending school to support a successful school transition.		
<b>Receiving school principal</b>	Update and maintain all of the child/youth's records: contact information of family members, caregiver(s), child welfare worker and emergency contact.		
<b>Receiving school staff</b>	Contact the sending school's principal to share information about the child/youth's individual needs.		
	Contact the sending school and request school files (indexed to student's PEN).  <b>Note:</b> The Permanent Student Record (Form 1704) and inclusions (recent report card, attendance records, IEP, transcripts) can be faxed, with originals to follow by mail, as per Ministerial Order M190/91.  Complete a file review of faxed material to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• determine what supports or services to coordinate for the child/youth (e.g., counselling, learning assistance/resource); and</li> <li>• understand the child/youth's strengths, interests and needs (i.e., identify and provide opportunities for extracurricular involvement, learn about the child/youth's personality style, etc.).</li> </ul>		
	Make short-term plans to ensure a smooth transition into the new school setting, such as identifying a mentor to help the child/youth settle into their new environment.		
	Provide additional learning resources, as needed, to help the child/youth achieve educational goals.		

## Checklist for Collaborative Planning When a Child or Youth in Care Changes Schools

Team Member(s)	Required Actions	✓	Comments
<b>Child welfare worker, caregiver(s), and school staff</b>	Provide and sign any necessary release forms for the previous and new schools to share information to enhance planning for the child/youth. If the child/youth has been a subject of a student safety matter this should be included as part of the planning.		
	Determine needs for support to stabilize the child/youth's comfort and compliance with routines: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• take time to orient and welcome the child/youth and family to the school to establish a sense of belonging;</li> <li>• familiarize the child/youth with the new school's code of conduct;</li> <li>• speak directly to classroom teacher(s) about homework and upcoming field trips;</li> <li>• familiarize themselves and the child/youth with sign-in/sign-out procedures, and attendance expectations; and</li> <li>• familiarize themselves and the child/youth with opportunities to be included in school clubs and other extracurricular activities.</li> </ul>		
	Immediately following registration at the new school: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• discuss the child/youth's needs and past strategies and practices; and</li> <li>• identify and provide the individualized supports and services the school determines necessary to ensure a successful transition (e.g., IEP or SLP, and the relevant sections of the Care Plan).<sup>1</sup></li> </ul>		
	Document ongoing communications (e.g., log of phone calls, meeting notes, checklists, letters, email, etc.).		
	<b>Other considerations</b>		

<sup>1</sup> These supports are in addition to those commonly available to students on an as needed basis (e.g., counselling, mentoring, peer support). A meeting of a school-based team, including child welfare worker(s) and caregiver(s), is an effective means to support this step.

## 6D: Collaborative Planning Checklist: Change in Living Arrangement

The checklists in **6C** and **6D** outline the roles and responsibilities recommended to enhance information sharing and planning for children and youth in care who are experiencing a transition:

- **6D:** change in living arrangements, including coming into care, a change in foster placement (and/or child welfare worker), or returns to live with family of origin.

<b>Checklist for Collaborative Planning When a Child or Youth in Care Changes Living Situations</b>			
<b>Team Member(s)</b>	<b>Required Actions</b>	<b>✓</b>	<b>Comments</b>
<b>Child welfare worker</b>	Immediately inform school staff of change in the child/youth's living situation, including any change in the child/youth's legal status and its implications for members of their care team.		
	Work collaboratively to support a successful transition for the child/youth to the new living situation.		
<b>Child welfare worker and caregiver(s)</b>	Consult with the school to determine any specific supplies (equipment, clothing such as gym strip and supplies) that are required for the child/youth's classes and provide them as soon as possible.		
	Update and maintain all records: contact information of family members, caregiver(s), child welfare worker, and emergency contact information.		
<b>Child welfare worker and school staff</b>	Give information to the new caregiver(s) to support their ability to provide continuity and compliance with existing school routines (homework, attendance, extra-curricular school or community involvement, etc.) and to help provide stability for the child/youth during this transition.		

**Checklist for Collaborative Planning  
When a Child or Youth in Care Changes Living Situations**

Team Member(s)	Required Actions	✓	Comments
<b>Child welfare worker, care-giver(s), and school staff</b>	Sign/provide necessary release forms to share information that will be needed to enhance planning for the child/youth.		
	For a child/youth brought into care for the first time, develop short-term plans to ensure a smooth transition for them (e.g., identifying a mentor to help the child/youth adjust to new living situation, counselling, peer support, and other services).		
	Discuss the child/youth's needs and education planning required to support a successful transition to the new caregivers.		
	Discuss with school staff their observations of the child/youth's adjustment and progress with regard to school life and learning: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is there evidence of peer support? Belonging?</li> <li>• Is the child/youth completing school work?</li> <li>• Is the child/youth meeting their educational goals?</li> <li>• Are the current supports (school and home) effective?</li> <li>• If the child/youth is not meeting their responsibilities as a member of the school community, what joint actions can be taken to support the child/youth?</li> </ul>		
	Invite community members who have a relationship with the child/youth into the framework of support in a more formal way (i.e., to provide access to leisure activities and school events, such as family read-in or after-school sports activities), as well as opportunities for cultural continuity, particularly for Indigenous children/youth in care).		
	Document ongoing communication (e.g., log of phone calls, meeting notes, checklists, letters, email, etc.).		
	<b>Other considerations</b>		

## 6E: Out-of-District School Placement

### Sample Agreement

#### MINISTRY OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY DEVELOPMENT AND SCHOOL DISTRICTS OUT OF DISTRICT SCHOOL PLACEMENTS

##### PURPOSE

The purpose of this document is to provide a set of procedures to be followed when children/youth are moved from one school district to another due to action of the Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD).

##### STATUTORY OBLIGATIONS

The parties recognize the statutory powers and duties under the CFCSA to place children/youth into residential services where required.

*The School Act* states that any person who is of school age and who is resident in the school district is entitled to an educational program provided by the board of that school district.

##### PRINCIPLES

1. All children/youth are equally entitled to appropriate care and education.
2. The intent of this protocol is for staff of MCFD, school districts and other appropriate service providers to operate in a manner, such that successful planning for the child/youth is the paramount consideration.
3. The focus of this protocol is planning for the child/youth.
4. Placements should be based on the needs of the child/youth. The preferred placement for a child/youth is their home community.
5. The constructive and timely sharing of information is essential to sound planning.

##### DEFINITIONS

**Care Plan:** A comprehensive plan for the care and support of a child/youth.

**Current District:** The current school district where the child/youth is attending.

**New District:** The school district into which placement of the child/youth is being considered.

**Emergency Placement:** The placement of a child/youth, who is in the care of MCFD and/or subject to the provisions of a bail or probation order into a residential placement, in circumstances where prior consultation and convening of a Care Plan meeting are not possible.

**Placing Region:** The MCFD region making a residential placement outside the child/youth's current school district, and includes the placing child welfare worker or placing probation officer.

**Exit Planning:** A process in which the placing region notifies the current district of the plan to move the child/youth to assist in the transfer of essential information from the current district to a new district.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

- 1.0 Prior to placing a child/youth outside their current district, the placing region will ensure that all local resources have been exhausted.

## **PLANNED PLACEMENT**

- 2.0 Where a planned placement out of the current district is to occur, the new district, appropriate agencies and MCFD services in the new district will be consulted regarding the availability of services to support the placement. Where possible, Exit Planning will occur with the current district.

## **THE CARE PLAN**

- 3.0 A Care Plan meeting is a meeting arranged by the placing child welfare worker or probation officer, held to establish the viability and coordination of services for a placement of a child/youth in a new school district or community, other than their own.
- 3.1 The Care Plan meeting should include the placing child welfare worker and/or placing probation officer, a representative of the new district, caregiver, any other agency and MCFD services likely to be involved with the child/youth, and, wherever appropriate, the parent(s)/guardian(s) and/or child/youth. In some communities, the local Child and Youth Committee may provide a convenient and appropriate vehicle for developing the Care Plan.
- 3.2 Individuals from all agencies participating in the Care Plan meeting are to meet the following expectations:
  - provide full information regarding the child/youth necessary to develop a Care Plan;
  - provide accurate and current information about programs and services available;
  - if unable to provide the optimum service, suggest alternative services which might meet or address the child's needs;
  - explain what services would be provided if the child/youth were to be placed in the community;
  - agree to and specify a case manager for the child/youth.
- 3.3 To ensure prompt decision making and to avoid children/youth remaining without services for any protracted length of time, Care Plan meetings should be held prior to a child/youth being placed in a community. (When a child/youth has had to be placed on an emergency basis, see point 4.4 below).
- 3.4 The placing region may decide to place a child/youth in a community regardless of available resources, if this seems to be the best placement for the child/youth. The placing region cannot, however, expect services beyond those already offered at the Care Plan meeting.

## **EMERGENCY PLACEMENTS**

- 4.1 Any placement made on an emergency basis is made "without prejudice" to long term planning or to the Care Plan. (That is, an emergency placement shall not be used as a rationale for a continued long-term placement in a community.)
- 4.2 Immediately after an emergency placement, the placing child welfare worker or probation officer will communicate the name and relevant circumstances of the child/youth to any agency and/or MCFD service in the host community likely to be impacted by the placement.
- 4.3 Where a child/youth has been placed on an emergency basis and the placing region wishes the child/youth to continue in the host community, a meeting to determine a care plan must be initiated within 14 days after the initial placement of the child/youth.
- 4.4 Prior to the Care Plan meeting, services from other agencies or MCFD services may be provided in the host community as appropriate. There cannot be an expectation by the placing region that such services will be provided prior to the Care Plan being developed. Such services, however, will not be withheld unreasonably.

## 6F: Tips for School-Based Teams

# Children and Youth In Care } TIPS for School-Based Teams

School-based teams can consist of principals or vice principals, child welfare workers, counsellors, Indigenous support staff, teachers, students and caregivers. Some students may also wish to include a trusted support staff, a coach, or a community member. By supporting children/

youth in care in a positive and proactive way, the team is helping prevent crises and helping the children and youth become resilient, confident, and successful individuals.



### Establish Team Goals

**Identify roles and responsibilities** of each team member to ensure children/youth in care receive all supports they require.

**Identify one or more caring adults in the school** or a case manager who can regularly touch base with children and youth in care to ensure they are doing well and help them to focus on their strengths and abilities.

**Ensure students are involved** in developing their short-term and long-term goals and identifying their strengths and needs.

**Celebrate successes and give positive feedback** to children/youth in care and their caregivers in areas such as attendance, behaviour and achievement.

**Encourage and support children/youth in care** to develop positive relationships with peers and connections to school and community.

**Plan ahead for transitions and offer children/youth and their caregivers additional supports** during these times, if required. If a child or youth in care is suddenly moved to a new school, try to arrange an opportunity for them to connect with their old friends and teachers. You might also want to consider organizing a “buddy” for the new student.

**When new children/youth in care are registered**, gather as much information as possible about past academic achievement, enrolled courses, assessments and any significant mental health needs or supports and services needed to help with planning. You might want to call the previous school to expedite the transfer of student records and gather some preliminary information.

**Find alternatives to suspension and expulsions** to keep students connected to the school community and supports they require. Organizing a quiet and calm place where students can go and do school work with a supervising teacher and peer mentors, can help them stay connected and keep up with work when they are too upset to concentrate in class.

**Report school absences to parents/caregivers and child welfare workers**, follow up on prolonged absences (two days or longer) and help student re-integrate in the classroom upon their return.

**Ensure children/youth in care are aware of suitable programs and supports** available to them to attend post-secondary institutions or skills and career training.



## BUILD A STRONG TEAM

**Host a meeting with local agencies that serve children**, youth and families to connect and share information about what community resources are available to provide support.

**Identify a mutually agreeable processes to communicate** regularly with team members about the student's wellbeing, progress and celebratory achievements.

**Share and document relevant information about significant experiences in the student's life** (e.g. trauma and recent transition), past assessments (including student safety matter), critical incidents, and medical diagnoses, so the team can better understand the student's needs.

**Encourage a collaborative team approach**, based on trauma informed practice and 'wraparound' principles.

**Agree on a process to inform each other** about personnel changes to ensure smooth transitions and continuation of the collaborative approach.

**Ensure that relevant cultural supports are available** for students, including elder support for Indigenous students.

**Evaluate progress regularly and work collaboratively** on issues or conflicts that may occur.

## WHAT STUDENTS ARE SAYING

"Adults should be aware of how valuable and necessary their support is to youth, and should recognize the difference that they can make in a young person's life."

"Problem is that in foster care, you move around a lot so it's hard to start up school again."

"It's their job –our lives."

"I wanna go [to college], it's good to have an education."

"Make sure every youth has an adult who will support them with college applications or attend their graduation..."

## 6G: Tips for Teachers

# Children and Youth In Care } TIPS *for* Teachers

Each student has unique strengths, needs, and dreams. Children and youth in care need teachers to set the bar high for them and have the same expectations as they have of other students, with the understanding that discreet supports and services may be needed to give a child or youth in care the same opportunities to learn and achieve success. They benefit from being acknowledged for their strengths, given help when it is needed and

treated in the same manner as other students. They also appreciate discreet support and accommodations to help them through difficulties.

With the adults in their lives demonstrating understanding, realistic expectations and compassion for them, children/youth in care can experience increased success in school and life.



### LISTEN, SUPPORT AND CARE

**Make an extra effort** to build a trusting and supportive relationship with children/youth in care. For instance, you can inquire regularly about their interests, passions and talk to them in confidence about their challenges and needs.

**Demonstrate that all students, including those in care**, have rights, are worthy of love, dignity, and respect, and have a voice in decisions affecting them.

**Recognize and acknowledge the strengths, skills, abilities and progress** of all students, including those in care.

**Help children/youth in care set realistic, achievable goals**, without underestimating their abilities.

**Help connect children/youth in care** to activities that interest them.

**Celebrate successes** and give positive feedback to children/youth in care and their caregivers in areas such as attendance, behaviour or achievement.

**Encourage and support children/youth in care** to develop positive relationships with peers and strong connections to their school and community.

**Encourage children/youth in care to take leadership roles** in the classroom and to have an active role in steering their own learning, based on their personal interests.



## SUPPORTIVE ENVIRONMENT

**Children/youth in care, of all ages, benefit from being treated like everyone else** and not being labelled. Ask them discreetly how they are feeling or if require any supports.

**Allow children/youth in care to be present at school** even if they are unable to fully participate in class due to difficulties at home.

**Be aware of signs of trauma** and connect the child or youth in care with the school counsellor and other supports, while reporting any signs of worrisome behaviour.

**Help children/youth in care during transition times** and offer additional supports if needed. For instance, consider organizing a “buddy” for a new student.

**Connecting the students with** extracurricular activities, ensuring students and caregivers are aware of funding options available to support students’ participation.

**When new children/youth in care are registered, gather as much information as possible** about past academic achievement, student interests and strengths, enrolled courses, assessments and any significant mental health needs or supports or services needed to help with planning.

**Encourage and support children/youth in care** to become involved in extra-curricular activities.

**Ensure children/youth in care can participate** in school field trips and extra-curricular activities by contacting the caseworker or caregiver regarding questions about obtaining required fees or consents.

**Help children/youth in care connect to their culture and community**, including with their community elders if appropriate.

### WHAT STUDENTS ARE SAYING

“Adults should be aware of how valuable and necessary their support is to youth, and should recognize the difference that they can make in a young person’s life.”

“I had a teacher who changed my life. He was the most supportive person I met... He was very compassionate and caring... I grew as a person... the school was a second home.”

“Lots of us are pretty angry for one reason or another. [Teachers] should just be more understanding.”

“When I am dealing with too much my brain just goes into overload and I shut down. There should be more opportunities to work at our own pace.”

“Sometimes it’s hard when you don’t have parents to help you with your homework... or be at a nice graduation day.”



## 6H: Tips for Caregivers

# Children and Youth In Care } TIPS *for* Caregivers

Caregivers, such as foster parents, agency staff, and extended family, can help children/youth in care discover their strengths and abilities and overcome challenges and adversity.

A caregiver can celebrate the successes of a child or youth in their care, to acknowledge accomplishments, to build confidence and to grow relationships.

A caregiver is also a critical voice in advocating for a child or youth in care, working with school staff to best meet the child or youth's needs. By assisting the child or youth to express wishes and set goals in and out of school, caregivers can help them succeed in school and life. Most importantly, caregivers offer love, compassion, and a sense of belonging to the children/youth in their care.



### AT HOME

**Build a relationship based on trust**, showing the child or youth that they are important, cared for and valued, even when they may test the boundaries. Be a good listener, respect their opinions and make them feel comfortable to continue talking without fear of getting in trouble or being rejected.

**Talk to and listen to the child or youth** about school, friends, activities, teachers, assignments, and daily events, showing your interest in their life.

**Learn about what a child or youth's personal interests and goals are and how they can be supported.** Communicate your hopes about their future and your affirmation that they can graduate from high school and pursue post-secondary education or job and skills training.

**Teach life skills to your child or youth**, including them as a part of the family and setting them up for success once they age-out of care. Depending on their age and ability, children/youth in care need to be given chores and participate in family meal planning and cooking. It is also important to teach them about financial planning, how to be organized, and how to seek help when required.

**Provide a quiet study area in your home** and help with academic learning, supporting the education success of children/youth in care. Showing enthusiasm about school and learning sends the message that school is important and that you care about their success at school. Simple things like bedtime reading will improve the educational success of your child or youth and will also strengthen the bond between you.

**Establish structure and regular routines**, helping to provide a sense of normalcy in the lives of children/youth in care who often experience frequent changes and transitions.

**Play games and engage in activities together** such as sports or cultural events to support well-rounded development and educational achievement. Having fun together also promotes a sense of family togetherness and belonging, and shared enthusiasm about the importance and enjoyment of learning.

**Acknowledge and learn about the child or youth's culture**, offering opportunities for a child or youth in your care to explore their cultural background and participate in cultural activities if they are interested. Home based activities could include cooking, crafts, books or movies that feature a child or youth's culture.



## IN SCHOOL

**Work with the school to help school staff** recognize that the child or youth needs extra love, care, respect, and accommodation for their needs; this is important to their success in school.

**Become an active member of the school-based team** that supports your child or youth. You have a unique perspective from the amount of time spent with the child/youth; share this with the school-based team and advocate for your child or youth to help ensure they are well supported in their school and community.

**Talk with school staff on an ongoing basis**, helping them understand when your child or youth may be worried, frightened, or missing their parent(s)/guardian(s). Explain that some behaviour is a reaction to a specific circumstance or experience of trauma, which can interfere with concentration, learning, socialization and typical behaviour; let them know what strategies have been successful at home.



## IN THE COMMUNITY

**Support your child or youth's involvement in extra-curricular activities** such as sports, drama, clubs and volunteering; these activities can help build positive relationships and self-esteem. Encourage and assist your child or youth to participate in activities they enjoy.

**Spend quality time with your child or youth** by engaging in family activities such as going to the movies or taking part in outdoor activities; this sends an important message that they are a valued member of the family and community.

**Support your child or youth's attempts to make and keep positive friendships**, helping to normalize the difficult situation of being in care. Friends can also help them cope during difficult times.

**Support a child or youth's connection** to their cultural community, birth parents and extended family when possible as an important part of their social network.

## WHAT STUDENTS ARE SAYING

“Adults should be aware of how valuable and necessary their support is to youth, and should recognize the difference that they can make in a young person's life.”

“We want to feel ‘normal’ and that we are a part of the family.”

“There is nothing someone in care wants more than to feel ‘normal.’ I want to make mistakes and know that I will still be able to stay with you and that you will help me learn how to deal with things in a different way.”



## 6I: Tips for Student Engagement

# Children and Youth In Care

# TIPS for Student Engagement

As a part of the day-to-day activities in school as well as during school-based planning, decisions are made that directly affect children and youth in care. Children and youth in care should be supported to engage meaningfully in planning processes that have an impact on their lives, and their wider school context, and empowered to speak up and express their perceptions, preferences, concerns, and opinions. A trusting relationship with adults is needed to support students during these conversations and to advocate on the student's behalf.

Usually children and youth in care have the most complete knowledge of their own history, including their successes, worries, concerns, hopes and aspirations. For that reason, including student input leads to better plans and decisions. In addition, when a child or youth in care is involved in planning and decision-making, they are more likely to support the final decision, increasing the likelihood of successful outcomes. Furthermore, involving the student enhances their maturity and development by giving them structured, supported occasions to participate in and practice responsible planning and decision-making.



### Help child or youth in care build relationships, competencies and school connections

**Build a relationship based on trust**, showing the child/youth that they are important, cared for and valued, even when they may test the boundaries. Be a good listener, respect their opinions and make them feel comfortable to continue talking without fear of getting in trouble or being rejected.

**Build a strong, trusting relationship** with the child/youth in care. Inquire regularly about their strengths, interests, and passions and ensure confidentiality when talking to them about their challenges and needs.

Demonstrate that **all students, including those in care, have rights and are worthy of love, dignity and respect, and that they have a voice** in decisions affecting them.

**Support the child/youth in care in articulating their thoughts, feelings, and needs.** Encourage them to talk to you in confidence or organize their thoughts in writing.

**Ensure the child/youth in care is involved in identifying their strengths and in developing their short-term and long-term learning goals.** Help them identify and record their strengths and goals, and guide their learning to help reach their goals.

**Encourage the child/youth to take leadership roles** in the classroom, the school, and the community based on their interests and according to their age and ability.

**Encourage and support the child/youth to develop lasting and authentic friendships** in the classroom and the school. For instance, you may want to establish a "buddy" program in your class or school. Encourage them to "be the kind of friend that you want to have."

**Encourage the child/youth to engage with their culture and community**, participating in community events and activities, and connecting with community leaders, including their community elders, if appropriate.

**Work together with the child/youth to identify supports**, such as opportunities for participation in school or community activities, and to identify people in their lives who can provide additional support.



## Engaging child or youth in care in planning and decision-making processes

**Advise and support the child/youth to participate in in the planning and decision-making process** of the school-based team. Explain that although they may not be authorized to make final decisions, they have a right and responsibility to participate in and influence the process.

**Give the child/youth the clear message that you support them**, and that they have the right to be heard.

**Ask the child/youth if there is a support person** they would like to invite to planning meetings or other decision-making forums.

**Give the child/youth space to express** their feelings and desires in a way they feel comfortable with, rather than making assumptions about what they feel or want or how they want to express it.

Help the child/youth understand that sometimes **the adults may not fully understand how they feel or be able to fulfill every request**. Coach the child/youth to provide clear reasons for their requests, as well as conditions under which they are able to compromise or accept temporary arrangements.

**Do not publicly undermine or discount the child/youth's views, wishes or desires**. Take time to privately and respectfully discuss with the child/youth if you disagree with their input, making them feel that their voice is heard and valued and their opinion matters. Offer rationale behind decisions and how they relate to ensuring the child/youth's wellbeing and success. Try to understand the child/youth's point of view and speak with them respectfully in private if you feel it is imperative that they reconsider their views.

**Model and coach these strategies with other adults who work with young people**, helping them empower children and youth in care to engage in planning and decision-making processes.

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### WHAT STUDENTS ARE SAYING

“Please make decisions with me when you can; that is MY life in that file folder. I might not always like the decisions you make, even when they are for my safety, but the more involved I am and the more control I have, the better I will feel.”

“I see myself as a productive member of society not someone who is growing up to be productive. I am productive now. I hold views. I have lots to contribute now.”

“No mystery to youth engagement, you ask them and you do something about it.”



## 6J: Tips for Child Welfare Workers

# Children and Youth In Care



# TIPS *for* Child Welfare Workers

Child Welfare Workers have an important role in ensuring positive educational outcomes for children/youth in care. This role can include advocate and champion with respect to ensuring the unique learning needs of children and youth under their care are considered throughout their education.

Many children/youth in care require additional assistance and support if they are to be successful in school. Supporting

educational success, including meeting with school personnel, requires active involvement from the worker, the caregiver and others who are significant in the child/youth's life. Research indicates that high expectations and support are linked to higher student achievement.

### Ensure you understand the child/youth's unique educational needs:

- Within 30 days of the child/youth coming into care, meet with their school and include the child/youth and their caregiver, and parent(s)/guardian(s) if appropriate.
- Develop an initial plan, which may include but is not limited to:
  - Assessments;
  - Educational supports or other activities to support the child/youth through their transition to care;
  - How contact and communication will be facilitated.
- Assess the child/youth's learning needs by:
  - Gathering information from relevant sources, including the child/youth, their family, school, day care, pre-school, family physician and/or pediatrician, caregiver, Indigenous community and any others with direct knowledge of the child/youth's abilities and needs; and
  - Arranging for the child/youth to be evaluated by a qualified professional if there are any concerns or indications that they may have learning support needs for which they will need additional supports or services.
- Consult with school staff to determine whether the child/youth requires an Individualized Educational Plan (IEP).
- If necessary services are not available within the school system, consult with a supervisor to determine whether obtaining services outside of the school system would be the best plan for the child/youth.
- Where a child/youth in care is having difficulty within the regular school system, due to the impact of trauma and/or specific behavioural or medical needs, consult with a Child and Youth Mental Health Clinician or other behavioural specialist to determine the best supports and services for the child/youth.
- If necessary, in extreme circumstances, consider alternatives to in-school education programs in order to accommodate the child/youth's behavioural, medical or trauma related needs and to ensure the safety of others.

### Be an Active Participant in the Child/Youth's Education:

- Have regular contact with the school and participate in school meetings;
- Encourage and provide opportunities for the child/youth to participate in school activities, outings and extracurricular programs that will enhance learning and promote acquisition of academic and social skills.
- Address specific issues as they arise, such as prolonged absence or lack of achievement, in collaboration with school staff and the child/youth's caregiver as part of the child/youth's Care Team or Circle.
- Review the education program for the child/youth at least twice annually and document in the Care Plan.

## Minimize Disruptions:

- Whenever possible, support children/youth to remain in the same school they attended before the current placement, in order to ensure continuity, minimize disruption in their education and promote relational and physical permanency.
- A change in school is only considered when there is no other reasonable option or when the Care Team or Circle determines that the child/youth will benefit from a change in school environment.
- When a change of schools is necessary, contact the current and new schools to help facilitate a smooth transition for the child/youth, and to ensure that school records and other important information is transferred to the new school.

## Consider the Needs of Youth Transitioning to Adulthood:

- Determine with the youth their education and vocational goals, as well as the services and supports that can be provided to assist with their education or vocational development.
- Determine with the youth whether a specialized education program or service is required to best meet their potential and goals.
- For youth who plan to complete high school, plan with them to participate in graduation activities with their classmates. During the youth's Grade 11 year, begin to make a plan about how graduation expenses will be covered.
- For youth in care under the age of 19 years who are planning to attend post-secondary education or training, inform them about post-secondary financial supports that they are eligible to receive as former youth in care: <http://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/family-social-supports/youth-and-family-services/teens-in-foster-care/aging-out-of-care>
- For youth with support needs who are or may be eligible for adult services from Community Living BC, follow the Cross Ministry Transition Planning Protocol for Youth with Special Needs and begin the process when the youth is at least 14 years of age. Information about the Protocol can be found at: [http://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/family-and-social-supports/children-teens-with-special-needs/2012\\_ytpp\\_protocol.pdf](http://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/family-and-social-supports/children-teens-with-special-needs/2012_ytpp_protocol.pdf)

## Other Considerations to Support Success:

- Participation in social and recreational activities gives children/youth the opportunity to play and have fun, develop talents, expand and explore interests and interact with other children/youth and adults.
- Before a child/youth can participate in certain activities, sponsoring organizations may require a parent/guardian to sign the organization's form. Such forms might be entitled, for example "Parental/Guardian Consent," "Consent and Release of Liability," or "Waiver, Release and Indemnity" or some combination of similar wording.
- When a decision is made for the child/youth to participate in a particular activity and signing a form is required, determine the child/youth's legal status to decide who needs to sign:
  - If the child/youth is in care under a Voluntary Care Agreement or a Special Agreement, the parent(s)/guardian(s) should sign.
  - If the child/youth is in care under an interim, temporary or continuing custody order, the worker should sign or the caregiver may sign if a routine matter such as field trip.



## 6K: Signing of Permission Forms for Routine School Activities

Child welfare workers are no longer required to send Indemnity forms to the Risk Management Branch of the Ministry of Finance for approval.

Caregivers sign required permission forms allowing the child/youth to participate in routine school activities, including forms that include waivers and indemnities, unless the activity is considered to be a high risk activity (see information below), the activity is potentially inappropriate for the particular child/youth, and/or the caregiver has concerns about signing a form.

If the caregiver does not sign a required permission form to permit a child/youth to participate in routine school activities, the caregiver must bring the form to the attention of the child's/youth's child welfare worker as soon as possible so that they can determine whether to sign the form prior to the activity taking place.

Note: caregivers are insured against liability under the Caregiver Group Liability Program, and section 101 of the *Child, Family and Community Service Act* that states that no person, including foster parents, are personally liable for anything done or omitted in good faith in exercising a duty or function under the *Act*.

Parental consent may be needed for a child/youth in care under a Voluntary Care Agreement or a Special Needs Agreement depending upon the terms of the agreement.

Parental consent respecting a child or youth in care under an Interim or Temporary Custody Order may be needed if the Provincial Court has ordered, as permitted under s. 47(3) of the *CFCSA*, that the parent retains the ability to make necessary decisions about the child/youth's education and religious upbringing (this is an unusual circumstance).

Child welfare workers advise caregivers of situations when parental consent is required.

See table below for a summary of who has authority to sign permission forms:

Legal Status	Routine School, Social/ Recreational Activities	High Risk Activities
In care by agreement (Voluntary Care Agreement, Special Needs Agreement)	Caregiver (unless parent retains this responsibility under the agreement)	Child welfare worker (unless parent retains this responsibility under the agreement)
Removal	Caregiver	Parent
Interim and Temporary Custody of the child welfare worker	Caregiver	Child welfare worker
Continuing Custody (CCO) of the child welfare worker	Caregiver	Child welfare worker

## 7. Reference

**7A:** *Child, Family and Community Service Act - Section 70 (CFCSA)*

**7B:** Permanent Student Record Order

**7C:** Student Records Order (Independent Schools)

**7D:** Care and Custody Under the CFCSA

**7E:** A Guide to Sharing Information about Children and Youth in Care

## 7A: Child, Family and Community Service Act, Section 70 (CFCSA)

- (1) Section 70 (1) of the *Child, Family and Community Service Act* states that children in care have the following rights:
- (a) to be fed, clothed and nurtured according to community standards and to be given the same quality of care as other children/youth in the placement;
  - (b) to be informed about their plans of care;
  - (c) to be consulted and to express their views, according to their abilities, about significant decisions affecting them;
  - (d) to reasonable privacy and to possession of their personal belongings; (e) to be free from corporal punishment;
  - (f) to be informed of the standard of behaviour expected by their caregivers and of the consequences of not meeting their caregivers' expectations;
  - (g) to receive medical and dental care when required;
  - (h) to participate in social and recreational activities if available and appropriate and according to their abilities and interests;
  - (i) to receive the religious instruction and to participate in the religious activities of their choice;
  - (j) to receive guidance and encouragement to maintain their cultural heritage; (k) to be provided with an interpreter if language or disability is a barrier to consulting with them on decisions affecting their custody or care;
  - (l) to privacy during discussions with members of their families, subject to subsection (2);
  - (m) to privacy during discussions with a lawyer, the representative or a person employed or retained by the representative under the *Representative for Children and Youth Act*, the Ombudsman, a member of the Legislative Assembly or a member of Parliament;
  - (n) to be informed about and to be assisted in contacting the representative under the *Representative for Children and Youth Act*, or the Ombudsman;
    - (i) to be informed of their rights, and the procedures available for enforcing their rights, under
      - (i) this Act, or
      - (ii) the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*.
- (1.1) In addition to the rights set out in subsection (1), Indigenous children have the right to:
- (a) receive guidance, encouragement and support to learn about and practice their Indigenous traditions, customs and languages, and
  - (b) belong to their Indigenous communities.
- (2) A child/youth who is removed under Part 3 is entitled to exercise the right in subsection (1) (l), subject to any court order made after the court has had an opportunity to consider the question of access to the child/youth.
- (3) This section, except with respect to the Representative for Children and Youth as set out in subsection (1) (m) and (n), does not apply to a child/youth who is in a place of confinement.

## 7B: Permanent Student Record Order

The Permanent Student Record Order for the Ministry of Education is available at:

<http://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/education/administration/legislation-policy/legislation/schoollaw/e/m082-09.pdf>

Further information and instructions about the Permanent Student Records Order are available at:

<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/education-training/k-12/administration/program-management/assessment/classroom>

## 7C: Student Records Order (Independent Schools)

**Authority:** Independent School Regulation, section 9  
Inspector's Order 1/07 (I 1/07)  
Effective October 10, 2007

The Student Records Order for independent schools is available at:

[https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/education/administration/legislation-policy/legislation/schoollaw/k/i1\\_07.pdf](https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/education/administration/legislation-policy/legislation/schoollaw/k/i1_07.pdf)



## 7D: Care and Custody under the CFCSA

	Legal Status	Powers and Duties of the Director
<b>Care</b> Physical care and control of the child	Voluntary Care Agreement: Section 6	The parent may delegate to the director as much of the parent's authority as guardian of the child/youth's person as is required to give effect to the agreement: Section 6(2). The parent remains the guardian.
	Special Needs Agreement: Section 7	The parent/guardian may delegate to the director as much of the parent's authority as guardian of the child/youth's person as is required to give effect to the agreement: Section 7(2). The parent remains the guardian.
	Agreement with a Child's Kin and Others: Section 8	When a parent/guardian authorizes another person to care for the child on a temporary basis, the director may make an agreement with the care provider for the director to provide financial support to the care provider. The care provider is responsible for guardianship responsibilities as authorized by the parent.
	Care of a child after a removal until an order is made at the presentation hearing: Section 32	To authorize a health care provider to examine the child/youth and to consent to necessary health care, if critical: Section 32(2) To consent to the child/youth's participation in routine school, social or recreational activities: Section 32(5). While the director has many of the substantive rights of the guardian of the child/youth's person, guardianship is neither formally nor fully removed from the parent.
	Youth on a Youth Agreement	The youth lives independently with support from the director.
<b>Custody</b> Includes care and guardianship of a child	Interim Order: Section 35(2)(a)	To consent to health care, to make necessary decisions about the child/youth's education and religious upbringing, and to exercise any other rights and carry out any other responsibilities of a guardian of the child/youth's person, except the right to consent to the child/youth's adoption: Section 47(1). <b>Note:</b> The court may order that the parent retain certain rights, in the child/youth's best interests: Section 47(3).
	Interim custody to a person other than a parent under the director's supervision: Section 35(2) (d)	The director supervises the child/youth in the living arrangement according to the terms of the accompanying supervision order. The person with the custody of the child/youth is responsible for the child/youth's care and guardianship, except for any rights retained by the parent according to the court order.
	Temporary custody to a person other than a parent under the director's supervision: Section 41 (1) (b)	The director supervises the child/youth in the living arrangement according to the terms of the accompanying supervision order. The person with the custody of the child/youth is responsible for the child/youth's care and guardianship, except for any rights retained by the parent according to the court order.
	Temporary Custody Order: Section 41(1)(c)	To consent to health care, to make necessary decisions about the child/youth's education and religious upbringing, and to exercise any other rights and carry out any other responsibilities of a guardian of the child/youth's person, except the right to consent to the child/youth's adoption: Section 47(1). <b>Note:</b> The court may order that the parent retain certain rights, in the child/youth's best interests: Section 47(3).
	Continuing Custody Order: Sections 49(4) or (5); Section 41(1)(d)	The director has all the rights, duties and responsibilities of a guardian of the child/youth's person, including the right to consent to the child/youth's adoption: Section 50.
	Section 54.1 Transfer custody of a child/youth in the continuing care of the director to a person who is not the child/youth's parent.	The director is involved in the planning and assessment process. Once the order is granted, the custody of the child/youth is transferred from the director to the care provider. The director may provide financial assistance after transfer of custody.



# A Guide to Sharing Information About Children & Youth in Care

Developed by the  
ministries of  
Children & Family Development  
and Education

2020



# A Guide to Sharing Information about Children & Youth in Care

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## Purpose

Communication and collaboration between parents and schools is vital to supporting students' sense of belonging and achievement at school and to ensuring students' safety and well-being. The goal is to promote communication between the Ministry of Children and Family Development and school districts and independent schools to strengthen joint planning that leads to positive outcomes for children and youth in care (CYIC), while ensuring information is shared legally and in a manner that honors and respects privacy and confidentiality.

This document is intended to guide information sharing between child welfare workers and school personnel regarding CYIC under the *Child, Family and Community Service Act (CFCSA)*. This includes information sharing between parents (foster parents) and schools.

Decision-making about disclosure of personal and confidential information about CYIC must balance the need to share information to protect their safety and well-being with the need to protect their privacy. This document is intended to clarify for child welfare workers and school personnel what information can and should be shared, according to legislation, as well as the restrictions on what can be disclosed.

## Scope

This document only addresses the sharing of personal information about CYIC under the *CFCSA* or, less frequently, the *Adoption Act*. Most children/youth who receive child welfare services are not considered to be children or youth in care. These include:

- Children/youth receiving protective services while remaining in the care of their parents;
- Children/youth placed in the custody of extended family by agreement or court order; and
- youth (16-18) who have entered into an agreement with a child welfare worker to receive financial and social supports to live independently.

Children/youth in the above circumstances are not in care and, therefore, outside the scope of this guidance document.



## Legislative Authority to Disclose Confidential Personal Information

For the purposes of information regarding CYIC, the authority to collect and disclose personal information is found, depending on who is collecting or disclosing the information, in the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (FOIPPA)*, the *Personal Information Protection Act (PIPA)*, the *CFCSA*, the *School Act*, the *Independent School Act*, and the regulations and orders made under those acts.

*FOIPPA* and *PIPA* require all public bodies or organizations to protect personal and sensitive information in their custody and control. At the same time, *FOIPPA* and *PIPA* also contain provisions that authorize the disclosure of personal information for specific purposes. The Ministry of Education, boards of education (school districts) and francophone education authorities are all considered to be public bodies under *FOIPPA*. Child welfare workers acting under the *CFCSA* are also considered to be public bodies, but the *CFCSA* modifies and adds to *FOIPPA* respecting what child welfare workers can do. Independent school authorities are not public bodies under *FOIPPA* but are instead governed by *PIPA*.

Under the *CFCSA*, a child welfare worker has the authority to collect and disclose personal information in certain circumstances. Children/youth may be in care by court order or agreement. When a child/youth is in care by agreement, the parents remain the guardians and the child welfare worker is responsible for the child/youth's care. When a child/youth is in care by court order, the care and custody and/or guardianship responsibilities rest with the child welfare worker, who has a duty to act as any prudent parent would by collaborating and communicating with school personnel as necessary to ensure the safety or well-being of the child/youth.

Under the *CFCSA*, caregivers can generally disclose the same confidential information about a CYIC as a child welfare worker. Given their role, caregivers (see definition in Appendix A) may have more frequent contact with schools than child welfare workers, especially for routine matters such as health information, academic progress and absences. However, depending on the nature and complexity of the information it may be more appropriate for child welfare workers to disclose certain information when necessary, such as court orders (e.g. restraining orders, access orders) and placement changes.

Under the *School Act*, boards have the authority to collect student record information for the purpose of providing an educational program. Boards of education are responsible for establishing written procedures regarding the storage, retrieval and appropriate use of student records. Boards must also ensure confidentiality of information contained in student records and ensure privacy for students and their families. Under the *School Act*, parents are entitled to be informed of students' attendance, behaviour and progress in school. The *School Act* definition of "parent" includes a person who usually has care and control of the student, which, for CYIC, will usually capture a child welfare worker.



The Student Records Disclosure Order, an Order made under the *School Act*, requires a board to disclose a student's record to a person planning for the delivery of (or delivering) health services, social services, or other support services to that student.

Similarly, the Student Records Order, made under the *Independent School Act*, permits the disclosure of student records to a person who is planning for the delivery of, or delivering, health services, social services or other support services to that student or child/youth. Independent school authorities must also have policies and procedures in place for complying with *PIPA*.

### **Information the Child Welfare Worker or Caregiver May Share with School Personnel**

Collaboration and information sharing between the education and child welfare systems assists school personnel, child welfare workers and caregivers to make decisions and plans for students that encourage educational participation and achievement and promote positive outcomes for CYIC. When working together with school personnel, the child welfare worker can disclose verbally or in writing any information that the child welfare worker believes is necessary to ensure the safety or well-being of a CYIC (section 79(a) *CFCSA*). The child welfare worker or caregiver can share the level of information they determine is necessary to help keep the child/youth safe and/or to support the CYIC's social, emotional, physical, or spiritual well-being in general or within the educational context. This is a broad disclosure authority; however, the child welfare worker or caregiver must assess the need to disclose information on a case-by-case basis.

In determining when and how much confidential information to disclose, the child welfare worker or caregiver considers whether the information will assist school personnel to promote the CYIC's safety or well-being. Specifically, the child welfare worker or caregiver considers:

- the CYIC's needs for supports and services offered by the education sector that may benefit the student;
- the CYIC's needs for an immediate support or service (e.g. due to sudden illness or traumatic event) that can be provided by the education sector;
- the effect of the disclosure on the CYIC;
- the CYIC's legal status; and
- the views of the parent(s) and/or CYIC (when CYIC are in care by agreement the parent's consent may be required).



If a child welfare worker or caregiver is enrolling a student in school, all the necessary personal information of the student that would generally be provided by a parent must be given to the school. If a student is already registered at a school and a child welfare worker is fulfilling the care/custody/guardianship role in relation to CYIC and the child welfare worker determines that disclosing information about the in-care status of a child/youth to school personnel is necessary to ensure their safety or well-being, consideration may also be given to disclosing:

- the name of the child welfare worker with responsibility for the child/youth;
- the name and contact information for caregivers (e.g. foster parent(s) or residential care provider);
- any health or safety concerns for the CYIC or others;
- any no contact or restraining orders relevant to the school environment;
- information relevant to assessing the CYIC and/or developing an educational plan; and
- cultural teachings/considerations as shared by family and/or community including but not limited to Indigenous ways of knowing and being.

The amount and type of information the child welfare worker or caregiver may share with school personnel varies depending on the CYIC's circumstances. Changes in circumstances that may result in the need to disclose information to school personnel include:

- a critical incident involving the CYIC;
- changes in the CYIC's need for educational services or supports;
- changes in the CYIC's need for an immediate support or service (e.g. due to sudden illness or traumatic event) that can be provided by the education sector;
- a child/youth comes into care, leaves care, or has a change in legal status;
- when the CYIC moves; and
- when the CYIC changes schools.

If school personnel have concerns about coordination or information sharing in general or about a specific child/youth, they should contact the local delegated child welfare worker or team leader directly. If there is no response or the response from the local office is unsatisfactory, school personnel should escalate within their own organization first and if necessary, school personnel should contact the Director of Operations responsible for child welfare services in the school district area in which the school is located.



## Information School Personnel May Share with the Child welfare worker

School personnel may share with a child welfare worker and the CYIC's caregiver any information that can be shared with a parent. When school personnel are aware that a child/youth or youth is in care, they may also contact the child welfare worker in the following situations:

- there are concerns for the safety of a CYIC;
- when a CYIC is injured or experiences trauma;
- when a Violence Risk Threat Assessment (VTRA) has been completed;
- to share non-attendance or flawless attendance at school;
- to share progress reports on academic related accomplishments or needs;
- to share cultural teachings/considerations as shared by family and/or community including but not limited to Indigenous ways of knowing and being;
- when needs for additional supports outside of the school system are required;
- when joint educational planning meetings for a CYIC are taking place;
- when the school is considering a suspension or expulsion;
- when school is developing Individualized Education Plan (IEP) for a CYIC;
- when a behaviour support plan is required to be in place to support the CYIC's behavioural needs;
- when a CYIC is returning to school following an extended absence (medical, suspension, expulsion, drop out); and
- to share extra-curricular accomplishments.

## Protecting Confidential Personal Information Disclosed to Schools

School personnel who receive personal information about a CYIC must ensure that the information about the CYIC is shared only in accordance with applicable privacy legislation (*FOIPPA* or *PIPA*). For example, personal information may frequently only be shared with other school personnel if the information is necessary for the performance of that person's duties. All confidential information about the CYIC must be securely stored and/or protected against unauthorized access, collection, use, disclosure or disposal in accordance with applicable privacy legislation<sup>1</sup>. Information, including a child/youth's status as a CYIC, can only be disclosed externally in accordance with applicable privacy legislation.

<sup>1</sup> FOIPPA s. 30, PIPA s. 34 Section of PIPA also requires an organization to prevent copying, modification or similar risks.



## When School Personnel Should Contact a CYIC’s Caregiver

School personnel may have frequent contact with a CYIC’s caregivers and are encouraged to discuss and share information as they would with any parent, including:

- day to day activities that require a caregiver’s response;
- signing for participation in school activities (see Appendix B);
- the immediate requirement of a caregiver (e.g. due to sudden illness);
- an injury or a traumatic event experienced by the child/youth at school;
- the educational status of the child (parent-teacher interviews); and
- progress reports.



## Appendix A: Definitions

"Caregiver" (MCFD/Delegated Aboriginal Agency) a person with whom a child/youth is placed by a director under the *Child, Family and Community Service Act* (CFCSA) and who, by agreement with the director, has assumed responsibility for the child/youth's day-to-day care (e.g., a foster parent).

"*Child, Family and Community Service Act*" (CFCSA) is the legislative authority to provide child welfare services in BC. Under the Act, the Minister designates directors, who in turn delegate the provision of child welfare services to child welfare workers who work for either the Ministry of Children and Family Development or Delegated Aboriginal Agencies.

"Child or youth in care" a child/youth who is in the custody, care or guardianship of a Director. ([See D7: Care and Custody under the CFCSA](#)) When a child/youth is in permanent care, the Director becomes sole guardian and guardianship responsibilities are assumed by a delegated child welfare worker.

"Delegated child welfare worker" a person delegated under the CFCSA to provide child welfare services, including responses to suspected child abuse and neglect.

"School personnel" refers to all authorized staff employed by the school district, francophone education authority, or independent school authority, including: teachers; principals, superintendents and other administrators; counsellors; and, school-based child welfare workers.

## Appendix B: Approval to Participate in School Activities by Legal Statuses

Caregivers can sign required permission forms allowing the CYIC to participate in routine school activities, including forms that include waivers and indemnities, unless the activity is considered a high-risk activity, the activity is potentially inappropriate for the particular CYIC and/or the caregiver has concerns about signing a form.

Legal Status	Who must approve: Routine School Activities	Who must approve: High Risk Activities
In care by agreement (Voluntary Care Agreement, Special Needs Agreement)	Caregiver (unless parent retains this responsibility under the agreement)	Child welfare worker (unless parent retains this responsibility under the agreement)
Removal	Caregiver	Parent
Interim and Temporary Custody of the child welfare worker	Caregiver	Child welfare worker
Continuing Custody (CCO) of the child welfare worker	Caregiver	Child welfare worker



