



shíshálh Nation

# K-12 Education Program Policy and Procedures - Summary

shíshálh Nation Education Division

PO Box 740, Sechelt, B.C. V0N 3A0 Tel: 604.885.9404 Toll Free: 1.866.885.2275 Fax: 604.885.6392

[shishalh.com/support-services/education/k-12/](http://shishalh.com/support-services/education/k-12/)

## Introduction

The shíshálh Nation K-12 Education Team accompanies students on their education journey through elementary and secondary school. The intention of our programming is to support the social, emotional, intellectual, physical, spiritual, and cultural development of elementary and secondary students as we are invited by Nation families. The K-12 team works collaboratively with all Nation departments to develop, deliver, and evaluate wholistic and culturally relevant wellness promotion and education programs, services, and activities for shíshálh children and youth. The purpose of the shíshálh Nation's K-12 Education Program Policy and Procedures Manual is to provide a clear, written course of action for the planning and implementation of the Nation's K-12 programs, services and supports. This document summarizes key program policies. A full copy of the Manual is available by request.

## Our team

All staff, contractors, and volunteers working within the K-12 Education Program are required to complete a Criminal Record Check, including clearance to work with vulnerable populations. At any given time, at least one team member with a current First Aid Certificate must be on the premises during activities and outings involving children and/or youth. Some excursions and/or high-risk activities may require a staff member trained in a higher level of first aid (e.g., Wilderness First Aid).

shíshálh Nation values professional growth and capacity development, especially as it relates to cultural safety and humility for non-Indigenous staff. Staff are supported to engage in relevant professional development programs, cultural safety training, Nation- and Division-wide training opportunities, in-service training and knowledge sharing, and other capacity building opportunities.

The Education Division welcomes the involvement of Nation staff and Nation members in the greater community in planning, developing, and implementing programs for children and youth. Anyone wishing to lead or facilitate an education program, activity or event for children, youth and families should discuss their ideas with a K-12 team member who will connect them to the Education Manager.

## Education Support Program

The Education Support Program provides direct, wholistic support to shíshálh children and youth on their educational journeys.

## Philosophy of shashishalhem Education

By shíshálh Elders

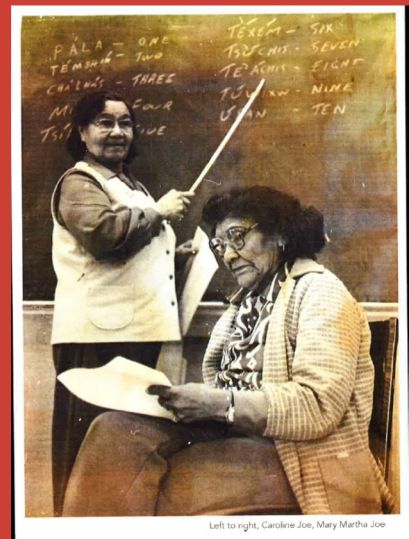
We believe if we respect, nurture and care for children they will grow up into well rounded confident adults.

To provide a quality education, we must reach out and build our relationships between ourselves and our community. It is these connections and relationships (past & present) that give us strength and will give the children strength to meet the challenges of the future. When we embrace our past, we will be able to handle the future.

shashishalhem, shíshálh culture and the Elders are the heart of the curriculum. The children have the opportunity to learn ancestral shashishalhem from the Elders. This will help them understand their own identity, develop good self-concept and self-esteem which will enable them to find a place in the world.

Our land and shíshálh connection and relationship to our territories, s̓ix̓ix̓us, tewanuk, ts'ún-ay and x̓én-ichen will serve as a primary source of learning.

For thousands of years the shíshálh traditional annual calendar of activities was based on the cyclical changing of the seasons, birth and growing on the territories. We believe that our children must continue to learn from our land 'tems swiya'.



Left to right, Carolene Joe, Mary Martha Joe

**Eligibility:** Participation is voluntary and eligible students include those registered and attending elementary and secondary schools within SD46, home learners, and those not currently connected to the education system. Support is available to:

- Children/youth who are shíshálh Nation members, or who have at least one parent/guardian who is a shíshálh Nation member, and who live within the shíshálh swiya and/or SD46 catchment area (Langdale to Egmont).
- Children/youth who identify as Indigenous (status, non-status, Metis, or Inuit) and who live on Nation lands.
- Children/youth in care (CYIC) living beyond the swiya and/or SD46 catchment area but within British Columbia may also be eligible for Education Support on a case-by-case basis.

**Intake:** Students can be connected to an Education Support Worker (ESW) in a number of ways including expressing interest during annual check-ins by the K-12 team, self-referral, or referral from other Nation teams, the student's school or another community partner. Staff will always ensure they have a family's consent before beginning the intake process or sharing information with the school or a community partner.

**Family Relationships:** Throughout a student's involvement with the Education Support program, our staff will communicate with parents/guardians about their child/youth's interests, needs and goals. ESWs also encourage children and youth to develop self-advocacy skills and support parents/guardians to advocate on behalf of themselves and their children.

**Collaborative Support Planning:** ESWs work alongside other Nation staff, including CMS teams, within a collaborative and cooperative structure. This includes regular planning and support meetings. This allows the Nation to provide wholistic, child- youth- and family-focused, wrap-around services and supports for all community members. Information is only shared with consent and according to the Nation's Information Sharing policy, with utmost respect for students' and their families' right to privacy.

**School Relationships:** ESWs support families in navigating school relationships in a number of ways, including, but not limited to:

- supporting effective communication between the school and the family
- supporting families to articulate and advocate for family and student's needs
- providing support and/or accompaniment at parent-teacher conferences and other school-based meetings
- delivery/transport of resources and learning materials
- facilitating attendance and ensuring appropriate transportation systems are in place for the student to attend school as per the Transportation Services policy
- support design and review of Individualized Education Plans (IEPs)

No action is ever taken by K-12 Program staff on behalf of a student or family without the express consent of the family. The family must provide written consent for the Nation to share information with SD46 and vice versa prior to any consultation with the school.

## In School Supports

shíshálh Nation employs a number of staff who work within SD46, including Language Assistants and Education Assistants (EA). These staff work in schools to ensure support services are available to shíshálh Nation students from kindergarten through to graduation.

## Transportation Services

All shíshálh Nation students that are eligible for bussing to/from school through SD46 are expected to register via the school district.

### Secondary Students:

- Daily transportation to and from Chatelech Secondary and the Sunshine Coast Alternative School is available to registered secondary students living on Nation lands
- Requests for bussing are generally made at the beginning of the school year; however, families may request to be added to the transportation list at any point throughout the school year. Requests will be approved based on space availability.
- Families are asked to sign a Parent/Caregiver Transportation Agreement that details expectations and responsibilities of Nation staff, students and families.
- Only those students registered for transportation services are able to ride on the Nation bus/van.
- Students are picked up and dropped off at designated stops. The daily schedule is created by the Education Manager and shared with families when they are added to the transportation list and whenever any changes are made.
- If a student is not ready by the scheduled pick-up time and misses the van, transportation to school becomes the responsibility of family. However, they may reach out to the Education Manager who may be able to support transportation, upon availability, with no guarantee that the student will arrive at school on time.
- Students are picked up and dropped off at the same location, unless prior arrangements have been made in advance (minimum 24 hours) with the Education Manager. The van driver does not make changes to pick-up or drop-off locations based on requests from families or students.
- Students must follow rules for safe transport when travelling to and from school, including wearing seatbelts at all times.

### Elementary Students

- Students attending Kinnikinnick Elementary and living on Nation lands are eligible for bussing via SD46 and are generally not eligible for transportation services.
- If transportation barriers makes it hard for an elementary student to get to school, the ESW and Education Manager will work with families and the school to find a solution. If no other options are available, the Education Manager may arrange for temporary transportation of the student by Nation staff.
- Decisions for providing temporary transportation services to elementary students are made by the Education Manager on a case-by-case basis with consideration of identified needs, resources available and staff/vehicle capacity.

### Supporting Home Based Learners

Home-based learners may include students participating in homeschooling/unschooling, those enrolled in online learning, and those being provided with homebound education services. Home-based learners that meet the relevant eligibility criteria and live within the SD46 catchment can access K-12 Education Program services and supports including the direct Education Support, school supplies subsidy and tutoring.

ESWs are available to support home-based learners by:

- Meeting with families/students to explore needs and share information about supports, resources and opportunities available to home-based learners.
- Making referrals and connections to wrap-around supports and services as appropriate.
- Supporting family to access technology and other educational supports as needed and where funding is available.
- Work with other Nation departments to leverage available grants/funding to support educational goals.

### Psycho-Educational Assessments

Psycho-Educational Assessments (also known as psych-ed assessments) focus on assessment and interpretation of educationally related psychological tests and educational tests, including tests of intelligence and cognitive abilities,

memory, achievement tests, and measures of behaviour. They are designed to identify learning or developmental disabilities and/or attentional problems. They also highlight students' academic and cognitive abilities, strengths, and challenges. In appropriate situations, they may also be used to assess a student's cognitive and adaptive ability to live independently.

Providing psych-ed assessments is generally the responsibility of the school district where the child/youth is registered, however wait times can be lengthy. Where a shíshálh student has been identified as needing a psych-ed but does not meet the cut-off for current academic year, the Education Manager may arrange to have a private assessment completed by a Nation-contracted psychologist. When a private assessment has been approved, the Department will arrange and pay for the assessment directly and the results will be communicated/debriefed with the family (including child/youth as appropriate). The ESW may sit in on results meeting with consent of family.

## Tutoring

The K-12 Education Program provides an organized **After-School Tutoring Program** for eligible students. Students and families may register for the program at any time during the school year. The Tutoring Program is offered four afternoons a week and includes:

- focused support in literacy, numeracy, and executive functioning
- in-person and digital learning tools.
- Up to four tutors per session; students are matched in small groups based on age, grade, needs, and tutor expertise.
- individualized academic support aligned with First Peoples' Principles of Learning and respect for shíshálh culture.

The tutoring program complements but does not replace classroom instruction or school attendance. The goal is to support student skill development, confidence, independence, and reinforce strategies for long-term academic success.

**K-12 Tutors** are contracted by the Nation after a stringent vetting process that includes:

- submission of the tutor's resume and references
- an interview with shíshálh Education Staff and the shíshálh Nation HR Department
- successful Reference checks
- a successful Criminal Record Check with clearance to work with vulnerable populations.
- agreement to adhere to child safeguarding, confidentiality, and code of conduct policies.

If a student has demonstrated needs not met through the After-School Tutoring Program, families may apply to have the Nation cover the cost of one-to-one tutoring with a tutor of their choice. One-to-one tutoring must be preapproved by the Education manager, is reimbursed up to a set hourly rate, and is generally capped at three hours per week. Families coordinate scheduling and communication directly with the tutor.

## Events and Celebrations

The shíshálh Nation K-12 team works with other Nation staff and teams to plan, support, and implement a number of annual events, celebrations, and ceremonies to honour and celebrate shíshálh Nation students' educational milestones and achievements. This includes supporting shíshálh youth to attend youth conferences as well as co-hosting an annual graduation celebration and supporting Rites of Passage ceremonies.

## Financial Supports and Subsidies

**School supplies subsidy:** An annual subsidy to cover the cost of school supplies. Amounts are determined based on available budget and dependent on the grade the student is enrolled in. Parents/guardians may apply for the School Supply Subsidy once per school year for each eligible student in their family. Annual School Supply Subsidies are available to students who are a shíshálh Nation member, or who have at least one parent/guardian who is a shíshálh

Nation member. Students must ordinarily reside on shíshálh lands, or live within the shíshálh swiya and/or SD46 catchment area (Langdale to Egmont). shíshálh child/youth in care (CYIC) living within British Columbia may also apply.

**Independent School Subsidy:** shíshálh Nation will subsidize tuition and student fees for students attending a recognized independent (private) school up to an annual maximum of \$5000 per student. Applications are accepted at the beginning of each school year (generally mid-August). If funds remain, applications may be accepted throughout the school year. Assessment of applications will be based on eligibility, past academic performance, and availability of funds. Funding will be distributed on a first come, first served basis and with priority given to first-time applicants. Independent school subsidies are not guaranteed year to year. Families of continuing students encouraged to explore other available funding opportunities (e.g., bursaries, scholarships).

When the Education Division is unable to provide financial support to cover demonstrated educational needs of eligible shíshálh students, staff will work with families as appropriate to help them find and access funding outside shíshálh Nation, including supporting applications, filing appeals, etc. Students who receive services through the K-12 Education Support Program and who may be otherwise ineligible for funding supports and subsidies based on eligibility criteria such (e.g. shíshálh membership) may be considered for supports on a case-by-case basis and subject to available funding.

## Child Safeguarding and Protection

shíshálh Nation recognizes that protecting the wellbeing of the next generation is paramount to what we do. We take all reasonable steps to protect children and youth from neglect and from physical, sexual, or emotional harm. The K-12 team will take prompt, positive and proactive action to protect children's welfare. We recognize that all children and youth, without exception, have the right to protection from abuse regardless of gender, sexuality, ability, race, ethnicity, language, or Nation.

Program staff will provide a safe and caring environment for students by:

- Adopting and implementing a Code of Conduct for all involved staff and volunteers
- Carefully recruiting and supporting appropriate adults as staff, contractors, and volunteers
- Adopting and implementing policies and procedures that promote children and youth's safety and welfare.
- Implementing clear lines of communication, authority, and decision-making so that staff have well-defined procedures and a consistent approach for handling all child/youth protection issues.
- Respecting the dignity and privacy of all participants by keeping sensitive information confidential and only sharing it on a 'need-to-know' basis.

## Off-Site Experiences / Outings

The shíshálh Nation K-12 Education Program offer opportunities for children and youth to participate in well-planned off-site experiences including single and multi-day excursions on and off the Sunshine Coast. Participant and staff safety is the primary consideration on all off-site experiences. Program staff work to ensure activities and trips reasonably accommodate the needs of all participants. All off-site experiences are planned and conducted according to key guidelines around program planning, staff and participant conduct, child and youth safeguarding, health and safety, and emergency response protocols.

 Please contact [mcameron@shishalh.com](mailto:mcameron@shishalh.com) or [rmcneely@shishalh.com](mailto:rmcneely@shishalh.com) if you have questions/feedback or to request a copy of the full draft Policy and Procedures Manual