

Ministry of Education Data Management Unit

PEN DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATIVE TIPS WORKING DOCUMENT

Below are some tips on how to navigate legal documents when registering /updating student demographic information. This information is derived from a combination of internet research and years of correspondence with students, parents and schools. Please send any questions or feedback to pens.coordinator@gov.bc.ca.

Chinese and Korean Names

Chinese and Korean names are never split between legal first and middle names. Depending on the legal document, you could see the name one of three ways, e.g., KIM, Minji, KIM, Min-Ji, or Kim, Min Ji, since two of the three name formats have the name together, either as one word or hyphenated, it makes sense the name with the space is a two word first name. Both Chinese and Korean languages do not have traditional middle names the way other cultures do.

Correct

Legal Surname = KIM
Legal First name = Min Ji
Legal Middle Name =

Incorrect

Legal Surname = KIM
Legal First Name = Min
Legal Middle Name = Ji



While the above example applies specifically to just Asian names, it can get a bit complicated when there is a legal name change or a western name added into the equation.

Correct

Legal Surname = KIM
Legal First Name = Julie
Legal Middle Name = Min Ji

Correct

Legal Surname = KIM
Legal First Name = Julie Min Ji
Legal Middle Name =

Incorrect

Legal Surname = Kim
Legal Given Name = Julie Min
Legal Middle Name = Ji

Again, based on experience and direct communication with students, school secretaries, parents, etc., the example with Julie as the first name and Min Ji as the middle names is about 90% of these name changes. The second example (or other 10%) where the first name is Julie Min Ji, parents have specified to the school that all the names together is the correct way for their child, please refer to the registration form when unsure.

Other Asian Names

While Chinese and Korean names have a set naming convention as noted above, other Asian names such as Vietnamese, Thai, etc. have no such rules and could have multiple middle names, or none. When you have a name like NGUYEN, Thi Thuy Ngoc, you could have anywhere from two to zero middle names. When in doubt, refer to the registration form to see what was filled out and use that as a guide for your legal document.

Important Information about using Foreign Passports

When you have a foreign passport and you see symbols in the name on the passport, e.g., on a German passport with a legal surname of Müller, that is the German spelling. At the bottom of all passports are two lines of text, the first which is universally in English, shows the same name as MUELLER. As that is the English version it is the correct spelling to use.

Also with passports, some nationalities have the entire name on one line and the naming convention is not apparent. For example, take a Vietnamese name such as Nguyen, Thi Thuy Ngoc, the way to tell how the name breaks down (at least for legal surname and given names) is at the bottom of the passport, you will see the three letters for the country the passport is from (eg VTM) and then the legal surname. The break between legal surname and the rest of the names is separated by two ">>". In the example below, you can see the two chevrons between Nguyen and Thi, which shows the surname as Nguyen.

Example

VTM>NGUYEN>>THI>THUY>NGOC>>>>>

Gender Reassignment Requirements to change Name and Gender

When you have a student who is changing their name from SMITH, John to SMITH, Jane, the first document provided to the school is usually a legal name change form. Note: a Legal Name Change Form from Vital Statistics is just a legal name change form and not a legal name and gender change form. In order to update the gender of the student, use a reissued Birth Certificate, passport or Driver's License showing the current gender.

If the student is currently in the process of gender reassignment, a letter from their doctor would suffice to update the gender and is in line with what Vital Statistics and ICBC require to make such a change.

How to Handle Students with no Legal Surname

It is now much more common to see students, primarily from India, who do not have a legal surname. On their Indian passport it will show the surname field blank. Since PEN, MyEducationBC and BCeSIS require a legal surname and the general rule is to use the most recently issued legal document, always use the Canadian immigration document if you have them.

Take a name like Parminder Kaur, the Canadian immigration document would read one of two ways:

First

Legal Surname = Parminder Kaur

Legal First Name =

Legal Middle Name =

Second

Legal Surname = Kaur

Legal First Name = Parminder

Legal Middle Name =

For such students who's name end in Kaur or Singh, regardless of what the legal document shows, we will for now on put the Kaur or Singh in the legal surname field. The reason for this decision is due to the volume of such students and an effort to maintain consistency and minimize delay in processing such requests. This process should also minimize duplicates in MyEducationBC/BCeSIS.

For all students who have no legal surname and their name doesn't end with Kaur or Singh, they will continue to be entered with their names in the legal surname field and the apostrophe in the legal first name field.

Correct

Legal Surname = Santhi

Legal First name = '

Legal Middle Name =

Incorrect

Legal Surname = '

Legal First Name = Santhi

Legal Middle Name =

The reason we have to use an apostrophe in the Legal First Name field is because it is the only symbol that won't cause a fatal error or be stripped out by PEN (e.g., periods). The reason the apostrophe is not used in the Legal Surname Field is because neither PEN, MyEducationBC or BCeSIS can do searches on an apostrophe.

Filipino Names and the Documents to use to Register Them

While the general rule is to use the most recently issued legal document, the exception is students with really long or multiple names. For students coming from the Philippines, generally the most recent legal document for them is the Permanent Resident Card or Confirmation of Permanent Resident Form. The problem is those documents often cut off the student's middle name. While you are still collecting those legal documents for audit purposes, use the Filipino passport or Certificate of Live Birth to register the student as those documents clearly show all of the names and break down how they should be entered.

Culturally, Filipino names have two or more first names and the middle name is ALWAYS AND ONLY the mother's maiden name. When you have a non Filipino birth certificate (e.g., a BC Birth Certificate) and the parent's names are on the document (and both Filipino), odds are the name is broken down the same as the legal documents from the Philippines. When in doubt, use the registration form as a guide to reading your legal document.



Correct

Legal Surname = Mendoza

Legal First Name = Felix Fabio

Legal Middle Name = Tan

Incorrect

Legal Surname = Mendoza

Legal First Name = Felix

Legal Middle Name = Fabio Tan