

## 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](mailto:pens.coordinator@gov.bc.ca).

### Chinese and Korean Names

Chinese and Korean names are never split between 'legal first' and 'legal middle' names. Depending on the identification document viewed, you may see the name one of three ways; KIM, Minji, KIM, Min-Ji, or perhaps Kim, Min Ji. Since two of the three name formats have the name together, either as one word or hyphenated, it makes sense that the name with the space is a two-word first name. Both Chinese and Korean languages do not have traditional middle names the way many 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

Based on experience and direct communication with students, school staff, parents, etc., the example with 'Julie' as the first name and 'Min Ji' as the middle names comprises about 90% of the name changes received. The second example (or the other 10%) is where the first name is 'Julie Min Ji', and the parents have specified to the school that all the names together is the correct way for their child. Please refer to the school's 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 actually have multiple middle names, or no middle names. 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 viewing a foreign passport, you may see accent symbols in the name on the passport, e.g., on a German passport with a legal surname of Müller, (the German spelling shows the accent over the u). However, At the bottom of all passports there are two lines of text, the first of which is universally in English, and shows the name as MUELLER. As that is the English version it is the correct spelling to use.

Passports for some nationalities will have the entire name on one line and the naming convention (first, middle, surname) is therefore not apparent. As an example; with 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 found 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 often a legal name change form. Note: a Legal Name Change Form from BC Vital Statistics Agency 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.

NOTE: If the student is currently in the process of gender reassignment, a confirmation letter from their doctor would suffice to update the gender in the PEN data, and is in line with what BC 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 India issued passport it will show the surname field as blank. Since PEN and MyEducationBC require a legal surname, and additionally as the general rule is to use the most recently issued legal document, you would want to always use any Canadian immigration document.

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 students whose name ends in Kaur or Singh, regardless of what the legal document shows, we will now 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.

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 nor MyEducationBC 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 they hold is the Permanent Resident Card or the Confirmation of Permanent Resident Form. The problem with using those documents is that they will 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 more accurately show all of the names and the break-down of 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 are both Filipino), the odds are that the name is broken down the same way, as on 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

## **When to change an adopted student's legal name**

When a student is first placed for adoption, the school usually receives a letter from an MCFD adoption worker requesting that the student's legal names be changed on all of the student's records. The ministry does not update legal names based on these letters nor should schools.

When schools receive such letters, staff can update the usual/preferred names to whatever the letter or family wishes. Schools should only change the legal names when presented with either; a copy of the adoption order (granted by the courts 6 months after placement), or the updated birth certificate (which the family can only order once they receive the order). The adoption is not finalized until the adoption order is issued.

Due to the fact that the family has a 6 months wait before the adoption is finalized, the names decided upon at the time of placement (MCFD letter) are often not what appear on the adoption order or updated birth certificate. Another reason to wait until the adoption is finalized is that sometimes the adoptions fall through and therefore the child's name is not changed.

The goal is to minimize the amount of extra work that both the school and the Ministry have to do for such records.