



RATIONALE:

It is customary for members of visiting nations to seek permission from the traditional stewards of the area and be welcomed through an opening ceremony. The protocol is based on First Nations' concepts of 'host' and 'guest.'

In keeping with this practice, acknowledgement of First Nations territory is becoming the norm at the beginning of meetings or events. It recognizes a relationship that has existed since time immemorial.

Land acknowledgements is also part of a larger process that we are undertaking, as individuals and as a School District, towards reconciliation between non-Indigenous and Indigenous Peoples.

ABORIGINAL LEARNING

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Land Acknowledgment Protocol Guide

Prepared by the Surrey Schools, Aboriginal Learning.



SUGGESTED WORDING:

“We would like to acknowledge the shared, unceded traditional territory of the Katzie, Semiahmoo, Kwantlen and other Coast Salish Peoples.”

“We would like to acknowledge that our school is on the shared, unceded traditional territory of the Katzie, Semiahmoo, Kwantlen and other Coast Salish Peoples.”

[French wording is available](#)

INTEGRATIONS IDEAS:

- School newsletters, monthly announcements, school websites, school plans
- School assemblies
- School agenda
- Morning announcements
- Staff Meetings, school celebrations, events, presentations
- Signage in school entrance, office and classrooms

KEY ELEMENTS:

- “**Acknowledge**” rather than “welcome.” Welcoming is reserved for members of the local First Nations. Otherwise, the statement is called an acknowledgment.
- “**Shared**” in Surrey, there is an overlapping history of land and resources used by the First Nations that lived and continue to live in the area.
- “**Unceded**: indicates there is no treaty associated with traditional territory in Surrey.
- “**Traditional**” much of the land in the Lower Mainland is not within current reserve land, but historically would have been used by particular First Nations and recognized as such.
- “**Territory**” is a broad region associated with one or more First Nations.
- **Katzie, Semiahmoo** have reserves of land that falls within the boundaries of Surrey Schools.
- **Kwantlen** has traditional land that overlaps with Surrey Schools despite not having reserve land within the boundaries.

PROCESS:



Any school district staff can acknowledge the traditional territory. Only the Indigenous people who live on that territory or are originally from the territory would welcome people.

The host of the event is the person to acknowledge the territory.

For larger, more formal events, it is proper protocol to have an elder or designate from the host Nation to perform an Opening or Welcome, if possible. This would require an honorarium to be given to this person.

Acknowledgement>Welcome is usually the first item on the agenda.

An acknowledgment should be stated from the heart, be personal, and including an action towards reconciliation is recommended.