

**NANAIMO LADYSMITH PUBLIC SCHOOLS**  
**Education Committee Meeting**  
**Information Sheet**

DATE: May 3, 2023  
TO: Education Committee  
FROM: Kirstin Funke Robinson, Director of Instruction  
SUBJECT: Children in Care Framework

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**Board of Education Strategic Plan – Board Goal**

***Safe, caring, and healthy learning and working environment that is inclusive of the diversity of our entire learning community.***

**Objective:**

- *Increasing awareness and capacity in supporting children and youth in care.*

**Background**

Children and youth in care are in the custody, care, or guardianship of a director designated under the Child Family Community Services Act. This includes children under a Continuing Custody Order, Youth Agreement, interim and temporary custody orders, Special Needs or Voluntary Care agreements, and those in care from another jurisdiction or province.

Although the overall provincial rate of children in government care has decreased steadily over approximately the past 20 years, children who have ever been in care in their lives continue to fare worse than their peers who have never been in care with respect to educational indicators of success. In addition, a disproportionate number of children in care are Indigenous. This is outlined in the provincial *How are we Doing? Children and Youth in Government Care and Youth on Youth Agreements* report (most recent public report September 2018) and is also reflected in more recent local district data since the publication of that report. Currently, approximately 3% of the students in NLPS have been in care at some time in their lives.

In 2008, a cross-ministry collaborative effort involving the Ministry of Education (now Ministry of Education and Child Care) and the Ministry of Children and Family Development resulted in the development of the *Joint Educational Planning and Support for Children and Youth in Care: Cross-Ministry Guidelines*. These guidelines were intended to improve information sharing practices and increase collaborative planning for children and youth in government care in the province of British Columbia. The original guidelines were revised and distributed in 2017 and again, most recently, in 2021. The guidelines continue to be revised every three years, in order to remain current with transformation efforts across both ministries. There are three major goals of the joint planning guidelines: 1) Information sharing, 2) Transition planning, and 3) Collaboration in programming.

## Strategies

In Nanaimo-Ladysmith Public Schools (NLPS), a number of strategies are underway to address the goals of support for children and youth in care.

### 1. Information Sharing

Names of students currently in care or those who have left care are provided to NLPS by Ministry for Children and Family Development (MCFD) and Kw'umut Lelum staff approximately bimonthly. These details are updated centrally in a local database that is accessible to principals and vice-principals through the intranet. In addition, the status of children currently in care is entered into MyEd, along with who has custody, and the type of care or custody order. Regular meetings occur with NLPS staff and the designated contacts with the Ministry for Children and Family Development (MCFD) and Kw'umut Lelum. These meetings include problem-solving for individual children and families, resolution of logistical challenges, and monitoring of student progress, as relevant/needed.

### 2. Transition Planning

Upon receiving updated care status of students, schools are prompted to verify that all children in care (either currently or historically) are assigned a mentor. This can be any staff member with a connection to the student but is typically a Counsellor, Child, Youth, and Family Support Worker, Indigenous Learning Support Teacher, or Indigenous Culture and Student Support Worker. On a quarterly basis, as aligned with key times of transition (i.e., beginning and end of year, prior to holiday periods) throughout the school year (known to be particularly challenging for children in care) mentors are provided with a collection of resources that can be shared with their mentees as appropriate. This prompts an individual check-in that includes goal setting and sharing of resources as needed. Particularly important examples of transition times include entrance into secondary school and transition to adulthood/potential post-secondary studies.

### 3. Collaboration in Programming

Involving all parties with responsibility for the care and custody of children in care is critical to ensuring consistent and continuous educational support. Even though the adults on a student's care team may fluctuate, it is important that students experience transitions as seamlessly as possible. At times of reporting on student learning progress, reports are shared with the student's care team, and members of the team are invited to any needed meetings to share and plan. Particularly in the event that children in care require individualized educational supportive planning, their care teams are invited to participate and are kept informed of decisions or plans made.

As our community emerges from the pandemic, our inter-ministerial work to support children and youth in care has undergone recent, concerted efforts to reinvigorate our collaboration. With respect to supporting children and youth in care, we are particularly anticipating the recognition and celebration of BC Child and Youth in Care Week from May 29-June 4 as an opportunity to build awareness within our own district.