

Online Learning Policy

Date came into force or revised

July 1, 2023

Status

New

Policy statement

A Student's educational program may be provided through Online Learning or through a combination of Online Learning and other types of learning. This policy differentiates what Boards of Education and Independent School Authorities can do with and without an Online Learning agreement with the Minister.

Rationale or purpose of policy

This policy sets out roles and responsibilities for Online Learning in the public and independent school systems. It also provides a general framework for the delivery of Online Learning. The framework is designed to support equitable, consistent access to innovative, high quality, flexible online educational programming for all Students in British Columbia. This policy replaces and supersedes all prior interim Online Learning policies.

Authority: legislation, regulations, orders

Public Schools

- [School Act, Section 3.1](#)
- [School Act, Section 75 \(4.01 and 4.1\)](#)
- [School Act, Section 79.1 \(2\) and \(3\)](#)
- [School Act, Section 82](#)
- [School Act, Section 86 \(1\)](#)
- [School Act, Section 166.4 \(4\) and \(5\)](#)
- [BC Reg 314/12 – School Calendar Regulation](#)
- [BC Reg 265/89 – School Regulation](#)
- [M638/95 – Individual Education Plan Order](#)
- [M150/89—Special Needs Students Order](#)
- [M152/89 – School and Student Data Collection](#)

Independent Schools

- [Independent School Act, Section 1.1](#)
- [Independent School Act, Section 8.1](#)
- [BC Reg 262/89 – Independent School Regulation](#)

Policy in full

In this policy, the term “Board” includes a Board of Education and a francophone education Authority. Currently, the Conseil scolaire francophone de la Colombie-Britannique is the only francophone education Authority in British Columbia. The term “Authority” refers to an Independent School Authority.

Online Learning is a method of instruction that relies primarily on communication between Students and teachers by means of the internet. It may also include other types of instruction at a distance from the learner, such as correspondence or teleconferencing, as well as in-person services. For this policy, primarily means 51 percent for Boards operating a District Online Learning School or Boards or Authorities operating a Provincial Online Learning School.

Boards and Online Learning

A Board may provide all or part of an educational program by means of Online Learning to Students who are resident or ordinarily resident in its school district. It may operate a District Online Learning School to serve Students who are resident or ordinarily resident in the district.

The Conseil scolaire francophone de la Colombie-Britannique may provide a francophone educational program by means of Online Learning to francophone Students who are enrolled with it.

A Board with an Online Learning agreement with the Minister may do the following:

- Operate a Provincial Online Learning School
- Out-of-district enrol Students who live in other districts in its Provincial Online Learning School
- Cross enrol Students who are also enrolled with another Board or an Authority
- Enrol Grade 10-12 homeschoolers who are registered with another Board or an Authority

Authorities and Online Learning

An Authority may provide all or part of an educational program by means of Online Learning. It may only operate an Online Learning school if it has an Online Learning agreement with the Minister to operate the school as a Provincial Online Learning School.

An Authority with an Online Learning agreement may do the following:

- Operate a Provincial Online Learning School
- Enrol Students who are resident of any school district
- Cross enrol Students also enrolled with a Board or another Authority
- Enrol Grade 10-12 homeschoolers who are registered with a Board or another Authority

Enrolment in Online Learning schools

Boards and Authorities may only enrol Students in District Online Learning Schools or Provincial Online Learning Schools for Kindergarten to Grade 7, Grades 8 to 9, or Grades 10 to 12 in accordance with the Online Learning Procedures Guide. This policy should be read in conjunction with the Guide.

Roles and responsibilities for Online Learning

The Ministry of Education and Child Care: The Ministry is responsible for setting standards for Online Learning. It establishes the standards for Provincial Online Learning Schools through Online Learning agreements between Boards and Authorities and the Minister of Education and Child Care.

The Ministry supports Online Learning by providing:

- A provincial Online Learning Management System that must be used by all Provincial Online Learning Schools (as required by their Online Learning agreement with the Minister) and that may be used by other schools to

support Online Learning;

- Technology for sharing Online Learning resources;
- Online Learning agreements with Boards and Authorities to operate Provincial Online Learning Schools;
- An Accountability and Quality Assurance (AQA) framework and process.

Boards of Education and Independent School Authorities: Boards and Authorities are responsible for the implementation, delivery, and assessment of their Online Learning programs and courses and the appropriate use of digital resources. To operate a Provincial Online Learning School, a Board or Authority must apply to the Ministry and, if approved, must meet the expectations set out in its Online Learning agreement with the Minister.

Boards and Authorities must ensure that only B.C. Certified Teachers or qualified Letter of Permission Holders employed by the Board or Authority teach Online Learning programs and courses.

Boards that offer Online Learning must ensure Students with disabilities and diverse abilities have the appropriate supports as described in the Special Education Policy and as required by the Special Needs Student Order and Individual Education Plan Order. See the Online Learning Procedures Guide for more information about Online Learning and Students with disabilities and diverse abilities.

Boards offering Online Learning must adhere to the requirements outlined in the Framework for Enhancing Student Learning Policy and Indigenous Education Funding Policy.

District Online Learning Schools: District Online Learning Schools deliver Online Learning programs to enrolled Students within their district.

A District Online Learning School may also offer in-person instruction and support services.

Provincial Online Learning Schools: Provincial Online Learning Schools deliver Online Learning programs and/or courses to enrolled Students across the province. Policies, procedures, and guidelines for District Online Learning Schools also apply to Provincial Online Learning Schools.

A Provincial Online Learning School may also offer in-person instruction and support services.

Active participation in Online Learning

Active participation in Online Learning is comparable to attendance in an In-person School. To receive funding, Boards and Authorities must meet certain criteria to demonstrate that a Student enrolled in Online Learning is actively participating. The Online Learning Procedures Guide outlines the minimum evidence in a Board's or Authority's Online Learning management system or other Student records that is required to demonstrate active participation.

Homeschooling and Online Learning

Homeschooling and Online Learning are different. See the Homeschooling Policy for more about homeschooling. For the purposes of earning credit toward graduation, homeschooled children may enrol in Grade 10, 11, or 12 Online Learning courses and still be considered registered homeschoolers. Homeschoolers can take Online Learning courses from the school with which they are registered or with a Provincial Online Learning School. See the Online Learning Procedures Guide for more information about homeschoolers and Online Learning.

Indigenous Students and Online Learning

Indigenous Students (First Nations, Métis, and Inuit) who are enrolled in an educational program provided by a Board or Authority should have equitable access to innovative, high quality Online Learning.

All students attending a school operated by a First Nation that is federally funded and is not a certified independent school under the *Independent School Act* may access Online Learning programs and courses offered by a Provincial Online Learning School or the school district where they live. See the Online Learning Procedures Guide for more information.

Adult Students and Online Learning

Adult Students may access Online Learning courses provided by the Board in the district where they live or a Provincial Online Learning School. See the [Adult Funding Policy](#) for information related to enrolling adult Students and funding eligibility.

Ordinarily resident Students and Online Learning

A Board may offer Online Learning to Students located outside of B.C. but ordinarily resident in British Columbia, providing the Board has established its own residency policy consistent with section 82 of the *School Act*. Under its residency policy, a Board may offer Online Learning to Students who are temporarily out of the province but are ordinarily resident in B.C. It must not charge tuition fees for Students who are ordinarily resident in B.C.

An Authority may offer Online Learning to Students who are temporarily out of the province but ordinarily resident in British Columbia, and must classify, according to the regulations, each Student enrolled with the Authority consistent with section 1.1 of the *Independent School Act*.

International Students and Online Learning

A Board or Authority may offer Online Learning to international Students from outside Canada who are in British Columbia for the purpose of attending an in-person K-12 educational program offered by a Board or Authority. International Students may access Online Learning through an Online Learning school in the school district where they temporarily reside, or a Provincial Online Learning School. For information about funding eligibility for Students from outside Canada when they are living in B.C., see the [Eligibility for Students for Operating Grant Funding Policy](#).

Boards and Authorities may not offer a K-12 educational program by way of Online Learning to international Students who are residing outside British Columbia. International Students studying in British Columbia may not take online courses from the Ministry's approved international Online Learning service provider (School District No. 73 Business Company, doing business as GlobalEd). International Students studying in B.C. may be restricted in the online courses they are permitted to take under the International Student Graduation Credit Policy. For information on how the policy is applied, see the [International Student Graduation Credit Policy](#).

Spending for third party service providers, learning resources, and support for internet access

Boards and Authorities may spend a portion of their grant on third party service providers or learning resources to supplement Students' learning experiences. A Board may provide financial assistance to a Student enrolled part time or full time in a Provincial Online Learning School. For requirements and spending limits, see the [Online Learning Procedures Guide](#).

A Board or Authority must not provide financial payments nor reimbursements to Students or their Parents/Guardians as incentives to enrol in an online school. They should not agree to spend a certain amount to support a Student's educational program as an enticement to attract a Student or their Parent/Guardian to a particular District Online Learning School or Provincial Online Learning School.

A Board or Authority may lend, but not give, equipment to Students or Parents/Guardians. Equipment means any tools of more than nominal value used for participating in Online Learning activities (e.g., computers and other information devices, hardware accessories, removeable media or other peripherals).

Accountability and Quality Assurance

For Provincial Online Learning Schools, Boards and Authorities must adhere to the processes set out in the Ministry's [Accountability and Quality Assurance for Online Learning](#) framework and process document.

Boards may also use the Accountability and Quality Assurance for Online Learning framework and process to review District Online Learning Schools, along with the following processes:

- [Framework for Enhancing Student Learning and Strategic Plan](#)
- [Local Education Agreements \(LEAs\)](#)

- [Indigenous Education Enhancement Agreements \(EEAs\)](#)
- [Funding Compliance Audits](#)

Related Policies

- [Special Education](#)
- [K-12 Funding](#)
- [Indigenous Education Funding](#)
- [Homeschooling](#)
- [Framework for Enhancing Student Learning](#)
- [Adult Education Program](#)
- [Eligibility of Students for Operating Grant Funding](#)
- [Glossary of Terms](#)

Resources

- [Operating Grants](#)
- [Form 1701 Instructions](#)
- [K-12 Funding General](#)

Contact Information

If you have any questions related to the Online Learning Policy, please contact the Ministry at:

Email:

EDUC.OnlineLearning@gov.bc.ca