



Indigenous Education School Plan 2025 – 2026

School: Hollyburn Elementary

School Indigenous Education Committee Members: Dana Sherri, Anthya Sidiropoulos, Sylvia King, Melissa Manninen, Shana Bystrom, Debbie Tobin

School Main Contact Person(s): Debbie Tobin, Shana Bystrom

1. What is the focus of your Indigenous School Plan for 2025/2026?

Hollyburn's Indigenous School Plan for 2025/2026 focuses on deepening our understanding that learning takes patience and time. We hope to honour the practice of slowing down and engaging meaningfully with each other, with knowledge keepers, and with the land.

A key part of our work will be learning from the land in intentional and respectful ways. Through Land-based learning, students and staff will spend time in our local environments - such as Ambleside Beach, Chatwin Park, and the natural spaces surrounding our school - listening, observing, wondering, and responding. We recognize the land as a teacher that invites us to notice, reflect, and learn when we are connected to the places and spaces we share. We want our learners to see themselves as stewards of the land, understanding their responsibility to care for and learn from the environments that sustain us.

We also want to emphasize that learning is relational and reciprocal. All staff will continue to build and strengthen relationships with local Indigenous community members and knowledge keepers, knowing that learning grows deepest when it is shared, nurtured, and honoured together.

2. If you have students with Indigenous Ancestry attending your school, what Indigenous Student Outcome(s) are you working to improve? (Attendance, Developing Sense of Belonging, Literacy, Numeracy...) Please reference your school data.

For our Indigenous learners, we are focusing on strengthening *transition* - both between grade levels and across key points in their school journey. We want to ensure that each transition feels supported, predictable, and grounded in belonging.

Our aim is to create smoother, more connected transition experiences by building strong relationships early, maintaining consistent communication with families, and honouring



each student's strengths, identity, and cultural connections. This includes intentional handovers between teachers, opportunities for students to meet new staff in advance, and moments that help students and their families feel welcomed and known as they move into new learning spaces.

By centering transitions, we hope to ensure that our Indigenous students experience continuity, confidence, and a deep sense of connection as they move through our school and their learning journey.

3. How does your plan connect to the Enhancement Agreement and/or the Equity in Action Goals found in the (see WVS Indigenous Success Plan)

Our plan connects directly to the WVS Indigenous Success Plan by strengthening relationships, belonging, and culturally grounded learning experiences. By focusing on patience, slowing down, and learning from the land, we align with the Equity in Action goals that prioritize creating environments where Indigenous students feel seen, valued, and deeply connected to their learning.

The emphasis on relational and reciprocal learning reflects the core intentions of the Enhancement Agreement. As we build meaningful relationships with students, families, local Indigenous community members, and knowledge keepers, we embody the commitments to belonging, identity, and student voice.

Our focus on land-based learning and time on the land reinforces the Equity in Action goal of offering culturally responsive learning opportunities. Engaging with the land as teacher encourages all learners to develop responsibility, respect, and stewardship, while learning from the places and spaces that hold meaning in our local context.

4. Highlight your school plans and learning intentions for the November 24th Indigenous Focused PD Day afternoon Session.

For this year's Indigenous-Focused Professional Development Day, our school will be centering our learning on land-based *learning* and deepening our connection to the land we learn on. With many staff members new to Hollyburn and new to teaching, our intention is to create an accessible, supportive session that offers both shared learning and practical starting points.

After the learning session with Dr. Dustin Louie, the staff will be able to reflect on their own positionality and lens through which they engage with learning and teaching. This



self-reflective and sharing time is integral to the decolonization process and out learning as a school community.

Our afternoon will focus on:

1. Exploring Place-Based Learning Through the Lens of Our Local Land and Decolonization

We will spend time learning about the importance of place-based practice and how the land - Ambleside Beach, Chatwin Park, and the natural spaces surrounding our school - can serve as a teacher. Staff will explore ways to listen to, observe, and learn from the land in intentional and respectful ways, grounded in Indigenous perspectives on stewardship, reciprocity, and relationship.

2. Co-Creating Learning

The Indigenous Education Committee will share one or two simple, adaptable land -based learning lessons that staff may choose to bring into their classrooms. These will be designed as gentle entry points for teachers who are newer to this work, offering clear structure while still honouring curiosity, observation, and connection to place. Our goal is to give each teacher a meaningful starting place they can build on with confidence.

Our intention for the session is to deepen our collective understanding, support new staff in meaningful ways, and continue building a school culture where learning from the land - and about the land - is woven into our shared practice.

5. What are you most proud of with respect to your Indigenous School Plan?

Ms. Manninen Div 4 – Grade 4/5 teacher is most proud of:

I am very proud to participate in the West Vancouver Indigenous Learning Circles each month -these gatherings are truly inspirational, and I'm honoured to represent Hollyburn. I always bring my observations and learning back to our administration team so we can stay connected to what is happening across the district.

In my Grade 4/5 classroom, I work hard to share with students both what I know and what I am still learning about Indigenous history, modelling humility and curiosity. I am deeply honoured to wear my ribbon skirt, gifted to me by an Indigenous family I once worked with, and I've been encouraged to wear it with pride as a non-Indigenous educator. I am also proud to teach my students to greet and respond using Squamish and



Cree language - small but meaningful steps toward deepening understanding, respect, and connection.

Ms. Bystrom Hollyburn's Librarian is most proud of:

I am proud that we have Indigenous community members and knowledge keepers visit our library. For instance, Tsitsayxemaat Rebecca Duncan (Language and Cultural Advisor) is coming to Hollyburn library this month. Becky is of Sḵwx̱wú7mesh and xʷməθkʷəy̍əm descent of the Coast Salish Peoples. Rebecca has devoted her life to preserving the Squamish language, Salish weaving, and cultural teachings that have been handed down to her by her ancestors. We are looking forward to learning from her.

I am proud to be building a library collection to highlight and support Squamish Nation and language revitalization (Huy Chexw). Library resources will be used to develop Squamish language vocabulary and in learning local place names such as Swaywi (Ambleside).

I am proud to support land-based learning in our school garden that emphasizes the use of local and Indigenous plants. I am proud to be contributing to a living classroom that fosters a reciprocal relationship with the land.

Sylvia King West Vancouver's Elementary Indigenous Success Teacher is most proud of:



I am proud of the work that is being done at Hollyburn to support the learning of our students and the commitment of the teachers to engage with outdoor learning regularly. For example, on a cold and bright November morning, students took their learning to Ambleside beach where they had the opportunity to learn about the history and stories of the land from a Squamish Nation knowledge keeper and parent of one of our students, Wes Nahanee.



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Wes generously welcomed the grade 3 students and talked to us about the rich history of this land, teaching us Squamish words and culture with his teachings and songs. The teachers and students at Hollyburn engage in the work of learning, acknowledging their own histories and cultural teachings, and learning Squamish ways with both open hearts and minds.

Instructions: Please put a PDF copy of your Indigenous School Plan in the AO Folder/Indigenous Education/Indigenous School Plans 2025-26 by December 01, 2025

Please save PDF as *(Your School Name)* Indigenous School Plan 2025-26)

These plans will be posted on the WVS Indigenous Education website and will be shared with the WVS IEC.