

Territorial Acknowledgement (Surrey)

Guidelines and rationale:

In First Nations tradition, it is customary for members of visiting nations to acknowledge the host Nation. In keeping with this practice, acknowledgement of First Nation territory is becoming the norm at the beginning of meetings and events. In doing so, we acknowledge the ties between the First Peoples and their land - and its importance to their culture, ceremonies, and traditions. It also recognizes a relationship that has existed long before the founding of Canada or BC.

(Adapted from: <https://www.ictinc.ca/first-nation-protocol-on-traditional-territory>)

Acknowledgements typically have the following elements:

- 1) **“Acknowledge”** rather than “welcome”. Welcoming is reserved for members of the local First Nation. Otherwise, the statement is called an acknowledgement.
- 2) **“Shared”**: in Surrey, there is an overlapping history of land and resource use by the First Nations that lived and continue to live in this area.
- 3) **“Unceded”**: Indicates there is no treaty associated with traditional territory in Surrey.
- 4) **“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.
- 5) **“Territory”**: a broad region associated with one or more First Nations.
- 6) **Katzie, Semiahmoo**: these two nations have reserve land that falls within the boundaries of Surrey School District. They are signatories of the Aboriginal Education Enhancement Agreement.
- 7) **Kwantlen**: this First Nation has traditional land that overlaps with Surrey School District despite not having reserve land within SD36 boundaries.
- 8) **“Work, play, learn”**: acknowledgement statements usually make some reference to how the land is being used.

Suggested wording:

“We would like to acknowledge the shared, unceded traditional territory of the Katzie, Semiahmoo, Kwantlen and other Coast Salish Peoples on which we work, play and learn.”

or

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

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Other elements that might be seen in acknowledgement statements:

- 1) **“Other Coast Salish Peoples”**: Musqueam, Qayqayt, Kwikwetlem and others would have used the Fraser River and as a consequence had a presence in the region.
- 2) **“Ancestral”**: this word is sometimes used instead of or in combination with “traditional”.
- 3) Traditional orthography: written versions will sometimes use non-English orthography: *q̓íç̓əy̓* or SEMYOME

Email signature files: (Examples)

One way of keeping Aboriginal Worldviews and perspectives “top of mind” would be to append a signature file to email messages that identify the traditional territory that the district sits on, using some form of an acknowledgement.

We acknowledge the shared traditional territory of the Coast Salish First Nations on which our district is located – Katzie, Semiahmoo and Kwantlen.

I acknowledge that I live and work on the traditional territory of the Katzie, Semiahmoo and Kwantlen Nations.

I acknowledge the unceded traditional territory of the Katzie, Semiahmoo, Kwantlen and other Coast Salish Peoples where I work.

*I acknowledge that I work and learn on the unceded shared territories of the Coast Salish. I acknowledge the *q̓íç̓əy̓* (Katzie), SEMYOME (Semiahmoo) and Kwantlen First Nations who have been the stewards of this land since time immemorial.*

We would like to acknowledge that the lands on which we work, play and learn, are on the shared traditional territory of the Katzie, Kwantlen, Semiahmoo and other Coast Salish Peoples.

I acknowledge the land on which I work and learn is the traditional and unceded territory of the Coast Salish peoples, specifically the Katzie, Kwantlen and Semiahmoo First Nations.

I would like to honour and recognize the traditional and unceded territories of the Katzie, Kwantlen and Semiahmoo Nations, on whose territories I work.

*Surrey School District
Unceded Coast Salish Territory (Katzie, Semiahmoo, Kwantlen)*

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