

# Connected Classrooms Program Policy and Implementation Guidelines

This document has been produced by the BC First Nations Education Steering Committee (FNESC) and the BC First Nations Schools Association (FNSA) to outline expectations and assist schools that are interested in participating in the Connected Classrooms Program.

The **First Nations Education Steering Committee (FNESC)** is committed to supporting First Nations in their efforts to improve the success of all First Nations students in BC. FNESC facilitates collaborative services in the areas of research, communications, advocacy, program administration and networking, and strives to share up-to-date information about available programs, government policies and initiatives, and local, provincial and national education issues that affect First Nations learners. See [www.fnesc.ca](http://www.fnesc.ca)

The **First Nations Schools Association (FNSA)** was formally established as a non-profit society with charitable status in 1996. The FNSA represents and works on behalf of First Nations controlled schools in BC and has a mandate to support those schools in creating effective, nurturing, and linguistically and culturally appropriate education environments that provide students with a positive foundation in all academic areas. More information is available at [www.fnsa.ca](http://www.fnsa.ca).

## Background

The Connected Classroom Program, managed by FNESC and FNSA, is intended to meet the unique needs and circumstances of students in First Nation schools, by helping those schools that offer grades 10 - 12 use technology to cooperatively offer senior high school courses, where needed.

- The Program was created to address serious difficulties First Nation schools experience in recruiting and retaining secondary teachers with specialized content knowledge. While the challenge of attracting such teachers predated the teacher shortage, the problem has worsened significantly in recent years.
- In addition, many First Nation schools face the challenge of having very small cohorts of students for senior courses that lead to graduation or are often required as pre-requisites for post-secondary programs. For example, some schools may have only one or two students wanting to enroll in grade 10, 11 and 12 courses such as physics or chemistry. In situations like this, it may be unfeasible for schools to hire a teacher for so few students. If this is the case, students may be unable to access specific courses they need to pursue their post-graduation goals, they may need to leave the community in order to take high school courses, or they

may have to take some courses through conventional on-line learning – a method that has proven to be less effective for many First Nations learners.

In response, the Connected Classrooms Program was created to facilitate an innovative opportunity for collectives of First Nation schools to offer high school courses jointly. The Program uses a combination of technologies to create an integrated, interactive classroom environment for students in various locations. Students enrolled in Program courses participate in a real time virtual classroom with a qualified educator who has the subject matter expertise needed to instruct the course, who co-teaches with a certified educator who supports students on-site.

The Connected Classrooms Program has evolved from an initial pilot with 4 schools and 26 students using an audio earpiece only, to using complex technological systems with increasing numbers of participants.

- In 2012/2013, the Program involved 7 schools and 31 students.
- In 2018/2019, the Program involved 13 schools and 170 students.
- In 2019/2020, 21 schools participated in the Program, and collectively offered 20 courses to 208 registrants.

### Definitions of Terms Used Within This Guide

- **On-site lead co-teacher:** a certified teacher employed by a participating school who is responsible for all school-based Connected Classroom Program responsibilities, and the teacher of record for Program courses and responsible for final determination of course grades.
- **Virtual co-teacher:** a FNESC-employed teacher with specific subject matter expertise who delivers course content to students virtually using real-time technology.
- **Microsoft Teams:** the course management website used by Connected Classrooms co-teachers to upload class resources, assignments, and other relevant course information and the online meeting platform that allows Connected Classrooms virtual co-teachers to share their whiteboard, document camera, or computer screen.
- **Lifesize:** the set of equipment required to run Connected Classrooms for cohorts of more than 2 students, consisting of 3 components: a phone, a camera and Codec.

## Connected Classrooms Program Quick Overview

- I. Each spring, FNEC and FNSA will distribute a notice to all First Nation schools in BC that offer grades 10 – 12, requesting that they submit a Letter of Interest if they intend to participate in the Connected Classrooms Program in the upcoming school year. A virtual information session will also be hosted for any schools that require additional information about the Program, highlighting expectations for participating schools.

*It is critical that interested schools respond to this spring notice as soon as possible, as the requested information is critical for effective Program planning.*

- II. Based upon the information collected through the spring notice, FNEC staff will ask all interested schools to complete a “needs assessment,” which will identify how many students the schools expect to enroll and in what specific courses in the upcoming school year. *While it is understood that schools can only provide their best estimates in the spring, the best data possible is needed to organize the required equipment and staffing.*
- III. FNEC and FNSA also will determine whether all interested schools have the necessary equipment to run the Program – that is, a set of Lifesize equipment required to run Connected Classrooms for cohorts of more than 2 students, consisting of 3 components: a phone, a camera and Codec; or laptops and two screens for cohorts of 1 – 2 students. In some circumstances, schools may have other equipment set-ups that will allow students to join Program classes effectively. Alternate approaches are welcome if approved by FNEC and FNSA as meeting the Program needs.
- IV. Schools that expect to participate in the Connected Classrooms Program in the following year will also be required to sign an annual Contribution and Services Agreement, which will outline the requirements for participating schools, including, among others:
  - having an on-site lead co-teacher who will oversee implementation of the Program in the school, provide student support, and assist the virtual co-teacher who is delivering instruction, as well as adequately supervising students and undertaking classroom management responsibilities for the purpose of student safety and well-being and promoting student success, and who will also assist the virtual co-teacher with the planning, administration, and assessment of course assignments;
  - having a quiet space to offer Connected Classrooms courses that is free from distractions and noise that will interfere with the virtual classroom environment;
  - having adequate internet connection to run the Program effectively;
  - ensuring a television, smartboard, screen, scanner, printer, and dedicated computer are available for Program use;
  - agreeing that all students will be provided required textbooks and materials by the beginning of course delivery;

- committing to have school staff participate in mandatory annual Connected Classrooms meetings and training sessions (including at least one annual meeting for principals of schools involved in Connected Classrooms and at least one annual training session for on-site co-teachers);
  - committing to keep all Program equipment secure and properly maintained;
  - committing to communicate regularly and pro-actively with FNEESC staff about any concerns or questions, including those of students and their parents, if relevant;
  - committing to maintaining the Connected Classroom Program schedule whenever possible – including not scheduling other activities for participating students during Program class times;
  - paying all local costs for Program courses in which the school has student(s) participating, including but not necessarily limited to: local connectivity costs, local network and technological infrastructure costs, classroom costs, and the costs of the on-site teacher; and
  - complying with all information privacy and security requirements as described in applicable privacy laws.
- V. The Connected Classrooms Contribution and Services Agreement will also require that schools that do not expect to continue participating in the Connected Classrooms for at least one full school year must return any equipment provided for the Program, to ensure that all equipment is allocated to maximize participation by interested schools and students.
- VI. In late August, participating schools will be asked to finalize and submit their expected class lists, and the submitted information will be used to finalize the schedule for the fall semester Connected Classrooms courses.
- VII. Interested schools will then be notified of final student enrollments in courses being offered in the Fall semester.
- *It is important to remember that the Connected Classrooms Program was not designed to fulfill each school's core instructional needs; it was established to fill specific gaps in schools' teaching capacities at specific points in time.*
  - *Every effort will be made to include all interested schools and their students who want to take the courses being offered, given space and funding constraints and a commitment to equity for all schools and students who are interested in taking Connected Classrooms courses. FNEESC and FNSA cannot guarantee that space will be available for schools to enroll all of their interested students, as the unique delivery method for Connected Classrooms courses means that enrollment for each course offering must be capped, usually at 20 students or five schools.*
  - *Also, course availability will fluctuate depending on funding availability for the Program, access to virtual co-teachers with the necessary expertise, and the course needs of all participating schools. There is no certainty that all of the courses each school wants to offer will be possible every term, or even every year. If demand is particularly high for specific courses, FNEESC and FNSA will endeavour to offer those courses more than once in a semester to accommodate all interested schools and students, but this may not always be possible.*

- VIII. Schools will be required to have all participating students or their parent/guardian sign a consent form, which must be returned before students can be formally registered in classes.
- IX. Once courses begin, FNESC-employed virtual co-teachers will provide course instruction according to the class schedule.
- X. On-site co-teachers will be expected to support the course delivery by setting up the required equipment, helping to ensure that students arrive and are ready to begin by the class start time, and then consistently overseeing classroom management, monitoring student work during lessons, and assisting students with questions.
- *It is also critical that on-site co-teachers communicate openly and regularly with the virtual co-teacher.*
  - *The on-site co-teacher will be able to observe students directly and will be far more aware of relevant information and issues than will the virtual co-teacher.*
  - *The on-site co-teacher will also be more likely to have contact with families, if the participating students are school-aged.*
  - *Any questions, concerns or feedback from students, parents and caregivers must be pro-actively shared with the virtual co-teacher as soon as possible to maximum the learning experience of all students.*
- XI. The virtual co-teachers will provide and lead the grading of all course assignments and student assessments, with assistance from the on-site co-teacher.
- XII. On-site co-teachers will be responsible for determining final grades for students enrolled in Connected Classrooms courses, with input from the virtual co-teacher. On-site co-teachers will also be responsible for submitting final grades to the Ministry of Education for the purpose of accessing the Dogwood or Adult Dogwood diploma.<sup>1</sup>
- XIII. On-site co-teachers will be responsible for implementing any necessary student discipline according to the student discipline policy of the students' school. This includes monitoring student behaviours, such as intoxication and/or smoking while connected to a class, using profanity or language of a sexual nature, and sexually harassing fellow students or teachers, among other things. See Addendum One for the Connected Classrooms discipline policy.
- XIV. On-site co-teachers, with input from virtual co-teachers, will be expected to monitor student attendance. If a student has been absent for more than 20% of classes, the on-site co-teacher, with assistance from the virtual co-teacher, will develop an attendance plan to address the concern. If a student has been absent

---

<sup>1</sup> Non-Independent First Nation schools and adult education centres that are FNSEA Certified through successful completion of the First Nation Schools Assessment and Certification Process can grant their eligible students the Dogwood or Adult Dogwood Diploma. First Nation schools that offer grades 10 -12 and adult education centres that want to offer the Dogwood or Adult Dogwood diploma can find additional information about the required steps in the Guide to the Dogwood / Adult Dogwood Graduation Process for Non-Independent First Nation Schools, which is updated annually and is available by contacting Lauranne Hutton at [lauranneh@fnesc.ca](mailto:lauranneh@fnesc.ca). First Nation schools that have Independent school status can grant the Dogwood or Adult Dogwood directly through their Independent school processes.

for more than 50% of classes, the student may be asked to withdraw from the class if it becomes clear that the student will not be able to successfully complete the course.

- XV. In January of each year, students will be registered for Semester Two Connected Classrooms courses, using the process described above.

## **SUMMARY: Roles and Responsibilities of FNEC / FNSA for Implementation of the Connected Classrooms Program**

- FNEC/FNSA will send notices each year to First Nation schools and adult education centres that offer grade 10 – 12 courses to determine:
  1. if they are interested in participating in Connected Classrooms in the upcoming school year;
  2. if yes, what courses they are interested in accessing ; and
  3. an estimated number of students expected to enroll in the preferred courses.
- FNEC/FNSA will make every effort to accommodate the most requested courses given the availability of virtual co-teachers and funding.
- FNEC/FNSA will contact all interested schools in the last week of August with a schedule of available courses for Semester One, and student registrations will be accepted by September. The schedule for Semester Two will be distributed in December of each year, and Semester Two registrations will be accepted in the first week of January.
- Every effort will be made to ensure that schools are able to register students in their top three course priorities, and to register students in other courses being offered *depending on space availability*.
- FNEC/FNSA will provide all participating schools with no more than one set of Lifesize equipment required to run Connected Classrooms, consisting of 3 components: a phone, a camera and Codec. This equipment will remain with participating schools as long as they have students enrolled in Connected Classrooms courses, and/or as long as they expect to have students enrolled *within a one year period*.
- FNEC/FNSA will arrange for the virtual delivery of Connected Classrooms course content. The number of courses provided will depend upon annual demand and available resources – human and financial. FNEC employed virtual co-teachers will be responsible for: lesson planning and delivery; designing and leading the implementation of course assignments and student assessments; and collaborating with the on-site co-teachers for determining final grades for the course.

- Virtual co-teachers will communicate openly and regularly with on-site co-teachers and, as appropriate and necessary, school principals to support Program and student success.
- Virtual co-teachers will provide course outlines, as well as material, supply, and text book lists by the middle of August each year.
- FNEESC Program management staff will communicate regularly with schools to ensure that any concerns or questions are addressed in a timely manner, and to provide necessary information and support for participating schools to effectively implement the Program.
- Participating schools will access Microsoft Teams through the Lifesize equipment provided by FNEESC/FNSA. FNEESC/FNSA will cover the costs of licencing this software for participating schools. Participants will need to sign A Terms of Use Agreement for using Microsoft 365.

## **SUMMARY: Roles and Responsibilities of Schools That Participate in Connected Classrooms**

- Schools that are interested in participating in Connected Classrooms for the first time will be expected to observe a class in the spring before their participation begins (which can be arranged using a lap top). This observation will assist the school in making an informed decision regarding participation. (See *Connected Classrooms – Considerations for Schools: Is this the Best Course Delivery Model For Our School and Students?*)
- Participating schools will be expected to make every effort possible to have students join Program classes. It is important to avoid scheduling other school activities during Connected Classrooms course times. Because other participating schools are scheduled to join, as well, the class must proceed and instruction will progress, making it difficult for students to keep up with the course work if they are involved in other activities during regularly scheduled class time.
- Connected Classrooms students must have appropriate technology to access Lifesize and Teams. For groups of more than 2 students a Lifesize system is required to provide the virtual co-teacher necessary audio and video capacities.
- FNEESC/FNSA will provide all participating schools with no more than one set of Lifesize equipment required to run Connected Classrooms, consisting of 3 components: a phone, a camera and Codec. Participating schools will be responsible for the purchase of all other necessary equipment, including a television, smartboards, screens, stands, copiers / scanners, etc. Schools that want to offer two Connected Classrooms courses concurrently will be required to purchase all of the equipment required to run a second class, including a second set of Lifesize equipment.

- Schools that do not plan to participate in Connected Classrooms for longer than a one school year period will be required to return the Lifesize equipment to FNEESC.
- All Connected Classrooms equipment on loan to participating schools should be stored in a locked space over the summer months to prevent damage or theft.
- For cohorts of 1 or 2 students, students can access Connected Classrooms classes using a laptop. If doing so, students need two screens – one for each platform. Participating schools are required to ensure students have access to a lap top and two screens.
- In exceptional circumstances, students may access Connected Classrooms courses from home – with approval from the Program Coordinator. Students need to be supported to access Lifesize and Teams independently if they are doing so. It is the school’s responsibility to ensure that students accessing courses from home have all required equipment and resources, as well as reasonable connectivity.
- Schools will be responsible for purchasing all student materials for the Program (workbooks, printouts, novels, textbooks, required equipment and supplies for science classes, etc.) before classes begin. The Connected Classrooms virtual co-teachers will distribute information about textbooks / required materials as soon as schools register students for a class, and schools will be expected to order the required materials immediately after.
- The Connected Classrooms equipment and students must be set up in a quiet space. There must be minimal background noise and limited interruptions during classes, for the benefit of students from all participating schools. Participating schools will be asked to allow FNEESC staff to see where classes will take place, if requested, to facilitate a discussion about the suitability of the location.
- Participating schools are expected to identify an on-site co-teacher who will be present in the classroom while students are connected to Program courses. The on-site co-teacher must be a certified teacher. This is a requirement of the Program in order for the Connected Classrooms courses to count toward the Dogwood / Adult Dogwood diploma.
- The on-site co-teacher will be expected to join a staff meeting on Lifesize in the last week in August. If a school is offering a number of Connected Classrooms courses, which are taught by more than one virtual co-teacher, that school’s on-site co-teacher should participate in a meeting with each virtual co-teacher. This meeting will be used for a number of purposes.
  - It will allow schools to test their equipment and ensure it is working properly before students arrive on the first day of classes.
  - It will allow all staff to introduce themselves and briefly meet each other, even if only virtually.
  - The virtual co-teacher will describe expectations of the on-site co-teacher and answer any questions about complementary roles and responsibilities.
  - On-site co-teachers who have participated in the Program previously can use the opportunity to share their experiences with those who are new to the Program, helping new co-teachers feel more comfortable prior to starting this unique learning experience.



If an on-site co-teacher is not able to meet at the designated time, an alternate time will be identified with the virtual co-teacher so they can meet and test the equipment / be made aware of course procedures and expectations prior to the course beginning.

- On-site co-teachers will be responsible for implementing any necessary student discipline according to the student discipline policy of the students' school. If any matter is not resolved by the on-site co-teacher and a student continues to disrupt learning for other participants in a Connected Classrooms class, FNEC staff will contact the school's principal to discuss the matter for resolution. In the very unlikely event that a matter cannot be resolved and the educational experience and/or safety/wellbeing of other students in the class is negatively impacted in a serious way, FNEC and FNSA reserve the right to withdraw the student.
- Participating schools must return signed consent forms from all students and parents of school-aged students before students can participate in any Connected Classrooms courses.
- Participating schools will be expected to provide data regarding student outcomes, as requested.

## Additional Roles and Expectations Of On-Site Co-Teachers

Participating schools are expected to identify a teacher who will be consistently present in the classroom while students are connected to Program courses – referred to as “on-site co-teachers.” These individuals are expected to “co-teach” the class with the “virtual teacher” who will be delivering instruction remotely using the Connected Classrooms technology.

The “on-site co-teacher” will be considered the teacher of record for Connected Classrooms courses. They will be professionally responsible for Connected Classrooms students' safety, formal records, and assessment results / final grades. *This is not an informal supervisory or “helper” role.*

On-site co-teachers will be responsible for classroom management, working to minimize distracting behaviours and monitoring students while they are participating in the virtual classroom. On-site co-teachers will be expected to: encourage students to attend classes / log onto classes on time and regularly; monitor student assignments to ensure students stay on track; assist students with tutoring and extra supports as much as possible; and encourage students to connect with the virtual co-teacher for additional help when appropriate.

A number of other roles and expectations for on-site co-teachers are described below.

### **Daily Start of Class Responsibilities**

Before the start of each class, Connected Classrooms on-site teachers will be expected to:

- **Prepare any materials the virtual co-teacher has asked for prior to the start of class.** Usually, virtual co-teachers will indicate what materials will be needed at least one day head. Occasionally, materials may be requested the morning of the class when unexpected needs arise, but these circumstances should be limited. On-site co-teachers are asked to be flexible when unexpected situations rise.
- **Ensure the classroom is set-up properly.** It is important to ensure that all students are sitting directly in front of the camera and as close as possible (not several rows back). There should be two screens in clear view of the students – one for Lifesize and one for Teams.
- **Join the Teams meeting.** Teams is used in Connected Classrooms to share lesson content during class. If the virtual co-teacher is writing notes on the board or sharing a presentation, Teams will allow students to see it. Each virtual co-teacher will have his or her own Teams meeting to join. The Teams meeting should be joined using a laptop that is connected to a smart board or projector.
- **Join the Lifesize meeting.** Each course has its own virtual room in the Lifesize directory. Five to ten minutes prior to the start of class, on-site co-teachers should join this room by selecting it in the Lifesize directory. The virtual co-teacher should be in the room a few minutes prior to class starting and this is a great time to ask questions, clarify instruction and build rapport. If students arrive early to class, this is a useful opportunity for the virtual co-teacher to build relationships with students, a vital component of a successful classroom – even a remote one.

Once the required materials are ready and both the Lifesize and Teams meetings have been joined, the virtual co-teacher will be ready to begin the lesson.

*Note: To prepare for any days that on-site co-teachers may be absent, it is useful to have one or two responsible students know the process for joining meetings. That way, if the staff substitute has never seen the system before, the class can still begin smoothly.*



Laptop connected to projector/smartboard



Lifesize video conferencing system

## Responsibilities During the Lesson

The virtual co-teacher will rely on on-site co-teachers for a number of vital responsibilities during the lesson.

- It is important to ensure that all students remain visible on the video feed.

- General classroom management is the responsibility of on-site co-teachers. Students should usually remain muted during instruction to allow better audio quality. This means it will be difficult for the virtual co-teacher to determine the content and appropriateness of any student conversations (although virtual co-teachers may choose to intervene in certain situations if they feel it is necessary to do so). On-site co-teachers will therefore need to monitor student interactions. Also, on-site co-teachers will be more aware of any personal situations students may be experiencing, which may impact their participation in a class. This information is important for interpreting and responding to students' behaviours.
- "Seat checks" are important for assessing student comprehension of the lesson. A brief glance at their work while students are performing tasks or completing assignments provides valuable insight into whether students are on the right track. This is a task the virtual co-teacher cannot manage. If on-site co-teachers notice that a student is having difficulty, they can encourage the student to ask the virtual co-teacher for help. On-site co-teachers can also help students with course content if they feel confident with the material being taught. If on-site co-teachers notice that multiple students are having difficulty with the same task or assignment, they should notify the virtual co-teacher; a section of the lesson may not have been clear, and clarification from the virtual co-teacher may be needed for many or all students.
- In the beginning, students may feel more comfortable asking on-site co-teachers for help, due to existing relationships with students, and/or students' nervousness about speaking to a group of peers located in other schools and/or to a virtual co-teacher only seen on a video screen. The virtual co-teacher will work to develop a positive rapport with all students and create a safe and comfortable class climate in which students are able to communicate any misunderstandings they may have. But that may take time and some students may still struggle to connect remotely. On-site co-teachers can be of great assistance until students' comfort levels increase.

## Using Teams

- Each course offered in Connected Classrooms will have its own Team (as defined in the Microsoft Teams platform), which can be used in a variety of ways. All participating schools are expected to use Teams as a platform for the following purposes.
  - Virtual co-teachers will use Teams as a repository for resources such as videos, assignments, lessons, course outlines, rubrics, etc.
  - Teams is also used to allow students to submit work directly to the virtual co-teacher. Students are able to access a gradebook that shows their marks and any outstanding assignments.
  - On-site co-teachers may be asked to use Teams to prepare any materials or resources needed for the next lesson, and it is important that they become familiar with the layout of the site and specifically the courses they are supporting.
  - Students may lose copies of assignments. On-site co-teachers can use the Teams site to access copies when needed.
  - Virtual co-teachers will often post the notes from the course on the Teams as a PDF file. If students are away, on-site co-teachers can help them catch up by providing any notes they have missed.

- All of the resources available on Teams are available for access from any site with an internet connection, including from students' homes. Students can use Teams as a study tool or for help with homework.
- For students who need extensions in their learning, they can use Teams to find extra practice assignments, activities, videos, etc. that will allow them to broaden their understanding of the subject being taught. If students are finished assignments early, they may be able to look to Teams for the next task.

## **Communicating With the Virtual Co-Teacher**

On-site co-teachers and virtual co-teachers work as a team with a common goal – student success. A successful partnership will depend on good communications before, during and after lessons.

- If there are students in the class who have exceptionalities, on-site co-teachers should communicate that to the virtual co-teacher as soon as possible and they should help the virtual co-teacher understand the students' particular needs.
- Often at the start of the school day, on-site co-teachers are able to assess student well-being – i.e. whether students had a good night, bad night, no sleep, etc. If there is useful information that will affect how a student behaves in class, that should be communicated by email to the virtual co-teacher as soon as possible to support the success of the class and student.
- If a student is not performing well in a course, the on-site co-teacher and the virtual co-teacher should communicate about strategies to improve the success of that student.
- If a student has extensive absences, the on-site co-teacher should follow-up to address the issue and communicate any relevant information to the virtual co-teacher.
- If necessary, the on-site co-teacher and the virtual co-teacher should communicate about any meetings that need to be set up with the student, parents, the principal, or any combination of people needed to determine reasons for absences and/or to improve the success of a student, as soon as possible.
- The on-site co-teacher should clearly communicate to the virtual co-teacher when school events are occurring. If possible, the virtual co-teacher should be sent a copy of the school's calendar so everyone is aware in advance about school closings / events. This will help with joint planning of strategies to keep students caught up.

## **Assessment Responsibilities**

- In general, the virtual co-teacher will create and provide assignments, lead the grading and assessment of student learning, and assist with the determination of final grades for the course. Assignments will be submitted to the virtual co-teacher, who will mark the work and return graded assignment to the on-site co-teacher. The on-site co-teacher should review the marked assignments to be aware of student progress and communicate with the virtual co-teacher if there is any need for clarification or additional information.

- Working together in this way will allow both co-teachers to have a greater understanding of each student's success in the course, and any strategies for improvement will be more effective if both co-teachers are jointly aware of student progress.
- The virtual co-teacher will assist on-site co-teachers with determining mid-term and final grades for the courses based on the Connected Classroom yearly calendar. The on-site co-teacher should communicate with the virtual co-teacher to finalize all course grades. *The on-site co-teacher is formally responsible for assigning final grades to all Connected Classrooms students.*
- If a student has not demonstrated sufficient learning by the end of a course, the on-site co-teacher can assign a grade of Incomplete (I). In this case, the virtual co-teacher will provide a summary of the student progress that outlines the learning standards for which the student has demonstrated sufficient learning. The school will then be responsible for supporting the student to complete sufficient learning of the remaining Learning Standards in order to have the student pass the course.
- It is each participating school's responsibility to report final grades to the Ministry of Education through a TRAX Data Transfer if the course is needed for access to the Ministry of Education Graduation Certificate. See the Guide to the Dogwood / Adult Dogwood Diploma Process For Non-Independent First Nation Schools for more information.

### **Managing Student Assignments**

- On-site co-teachers will play a vital role in submitting assignments to the virtual co-teacher. Assignments can come in many forms, such as written assignments, Power Point, lab reports, etc. In general, assignments will fall into two main categories: paper and electronic. Each type of assignment will have different submission methods and management strategies.
- On-site co-teachers will be asked to scan and email to the virtual co-teacher paper assignments, such as written tests, lab reports, quizzes, etc. These assignments will then be graded and scanned back to be returned to students. It is the responsibility of the on-site co-teacher to record student grades. For each course being delivered, on-site co-teachers should have a binder or folder to store student written assignments. Occasionally, an assignment may be misplaced or missed by the virtual co-teacher, and having a copy of the original assignment will make re-sending it easier.
- If students are completing assignments electronically, the student will submit the assignment directly through Teams or the student can email the virtual co-teacher directly with the attached assignment – but it is recommended that on-site co-teachers should be copied on the email. That way multiple records of completion are maintained.
- Whichever form of submission is relevant, the procedures should be communicated clearly to students, the method should be implemented consistently, and the co-teachers should work together to keep careful track of assignments that have been submitted.

**Before Class Checklist for On-Site Co-Teachers**

- Gather all materials requested by the virtual co-teacher
- Print any assignments/quizzes
- Check email to ensure there are no last-minute requests from the virtual co-teacher
- Join the Teams meeting
- Join the Lifesize meeting
- Encourage students to be in class, on time

**After Class Checklist for On-Site Co-Teachers**

- Send any completed assignments to the virtual co-teacher
- Monitor student work to support them in completing all assignments
- Prepare materials for the next day
- Let the virtual co-teacher know if students may need more support

## **Connected Classrooms Program – Key Considerations for Schools: Is this the best course delivery model for your school and students?**

Since its establishment, the Connected Classrooms Program has become a highly valued and meaningful course delivery option for many First Nation schools in BC. Schools that have participated in the Connected Classrooms Program have consistently indicated that their students find the virtual co-teaching model to be effective, and participating schools have reported high course completion rates and overall satisfaction with the Program's supports.

However, it is also important to be aware that the nature of the Connected Classrooms Program means that it may not always be the best option for all schools and for all learners.

It is therefore important for schools that are considering the Connected Classrooms Program to fully understand the Program's unique benefits as well as possible challenges associated with the model.

Most importantly, it is important to understand that the Connected Classrooms Program is an authentically cooperative model of course delivery. The Program is meant to facilitate a collective approach for offering students who are located throughout the province an opportunity to come together at the same time as one virtual class, in order to access courses that might not otherwise be available to them.

That exciting and innovative collaboration means that the actions of individual schools and students have significant impacts on learners in other schools. The success of Connected Classrooms depends on all participating schools being continually attentive to the needs of others.

On-site co-teachers must ensure that their students are not causing distractions for other students, they must encourage students to show up on time to facilitate a smooth and timely start to classes, and they must troubleshoot technology issues in advance of scheduled class times. Fundamental responsibilities must be met by all schools and students in order to create an effective "classroom" for all.

In addition, classes must go on even if students from one school are unable to attend, as instruction must continue for the students in other schools. Challenges may arise if a participating school schedules another activity during a Connected Classrooms class time, such as a field trip or a school-wide event; the class will proceed regardless, and students could fall behind. Connected Classrooms participation requires a strong commitment from participating schools and students.

Also, there are limitations with remote learning, even with a co-teacher available in the school and classroom. Schools participating the Connected Classrooms Program should consider their students' preferences and characteristics carefully before enrolling them in this delivery option, with a continued focus on promoting students' success and well-being.

Finally, it is important to remember that the Connected Classrooms Program was not designed to fulfill each school's core instructional needs; it was established to fill specific gaps in schools' teacher availability at specific points in time. Course availability will fluctuate depending on funding availability for the Program, access to virtual co-teachers with the necessary expertise, and the course needs of all participating schools. There is no guarantee that all of the courses each school wants to offer will be possible every term, or even every year.

The following questions and answers have been drafted to help schools consider whether this Program is the best option for their students.

## IS THE CONNECTED CLASSROOMS PROGRAM RIGHT FOR OUR SCHOOL?

**Question: Do we have a certified teacher who will be dedicated to lead the Program on-site and support participating students on an ongoing, consistent basis?**

**Answer:** Participating schools are *required* to identify a lead teacher who will be consistently present in the classroom while students are connected to Program courses – referred to as the “on-site co-teacher.” These individuals are expected to “co-teach” the class with the “virtual co-teacher” who will be delivering instruction remotely using the Connected Classrooms technology.

NB: Principals of schools that participate in Connected Classrooms can support the Program in many ways, but they should not act as the on-site co-teacher for Program courses. Too often, the demands of the principal position would make their classroom support inconsistent, limiting the effectiveness of the Program. Other ways that principals are expected to support the Connected Classroom Program include:

- Ensuring all materials and supplies are purchased in a timely way
- Ensuring the on-site co-teacher attends all Connected Classrooms Program training and is in regular contact with the virtual co-teacher
- Assisting with the training and instructional leadership of on-site co-teachers
- Reviewing student marks and assignments frequently to ensure that students are up-to-date, adequately supported, and likely to succeed

Further, a teacher who is delivering instruction to other students in the same room cannot provide an adequate level of support to students participating in a Connected Classroom course. It is important to have a dedicated teacher for the students in the Program classes. In fact, holding a Connected Classrooms class in the same room where another class is taking place is not appropriate; the Program requires a quiet setting where students can hear the virtual co-teacher, and students must be able to unmute to participate in classes without excessive background noise. *This is critical for the learning experience of the students in all participating schools.*



It is also imperative that on-site co-teachers communicate openly and regularly with the virtual co-teacher. The on-site co-teacher will be able to observe students directly and will be aware of far more information than will the virtual co-teacher. The on-site co-teacher will also be more likely to have contact with families, if the participating students are school-aged; any questions, concerns or feedback from parents and caregivers must be shared with the virtual co-teacher to maximize the learning experience of all students.

The "on-site co-teacher" will be considered the teacher of record for Connected Classrooms courses. They will be professionally responsible for the Connected Classrooms students' safety, formal records, and assessment results / final grades. *This is not an informal supervisory or "helper" role.*

**Question: Do we have an on-site co-teacher who will be comfortable using all of the required technology?**

**Answer:** On-site co-teachers will be expected to understand how to start each class by joining the Teams meeting and joining the Lifesize meeting. This is the responsibility of each participating school and is a necessary part of participation.

On-site co-teachers will be provided training for this role, and they will be expected to join a staff meeting on Lifesize in the last week in August. If a school is offering Connected Classrooms courses taught by more than one virtual co-teacher, that school's on-site co-teacher should participate in a meeting with each virtual co-teacher. This meeting will be used for a number of purposes.

- It will allow schools to test their equipment and ensure it is working properly before students arrive on the first day of classes.
- It will allow all staff to introduce themselves and briefly meet each other, even if only virtually.
- The virtual co-teacher will review the expectations of on-site co-teachers and answer any questions they may have.
- On-site co-teachers who have participated in the Program previously can use the opportunity to share their experiences with those who are new to the Program, helping new school representatives feel more comfortable prior to starting this unique teaching and learning format.

If an on-site co-teacher is not able to meet at the designated time, an alternate time will be identified with the virtual co-teacher so they can meet and test the equipment / be made aware of course procedures and expectations prior to the course beginning.

Ultimately, however, it is critical that schools interested in joining Connected Classrooms are confident that they have a certified teacher able to fill the unique role of on-site co-teacher.

**Do we have adequate Information and Communications Technology (ICT) support staff available to assist with the setup and maintenance of Connected Classrooms?**

---

Schools joining Connected Classrooms will be supported in learning to use the Program equipment, and some assistance will be available to help with the initial set up. Also, when courses are underway FNESC staff will be available to answer ICT questions by telephone. However, FNESC/FNSA will not be able to provide ongoing, regular technology assistance on-site. *Participating schools will be required to trouble-shoot technology difficulties locally, when they arise.*

### **Do we have adequate classroom and storage space for participation in the Program?**

Program classes must be held in a quiet classroom / space where there are limited interruptions from other staff and students in the school. The best-case scenario is a room dedicated solely to Connected Classrooms instruction. A hallway or the back of another classroom where other instruction is being delivered is not appropriate. While students receiving instruction through Connected Classrooms can use headphones to overcome background noise, the virtual co-teacher also needs to be able to clearly hear students. If there is background noise, it makes it very difficult to communicate with students and it can be disruptive for students in other schools connected to the class.

All Connected Classrooms Program equipment on loan to participating schools must be stored in a locked space over the summer months to prevent damage or theft, and should be located in a safe location during the school year.

### **Are we able to provide all of the equipment and materials required to make Connected Classrooms implementation possible?**

Participating schools must be able to provide a television, a smartboard, a screen, as well as a scanner and a computer dedicated to the Program.

They must also ensure that all students are provided textbooks and materials required for the course by the beginning of the course.

---

## IS THE CONNECTED CLASSROOMS PROGRAM RIGHT FOR PARTICULAR STUDENTS?

**Do the students have the necessary foundational skills / consistent attendance, and will we be able to assist participating students so that they are well prepared and attend classes regularly?**

Courses available through the Connected Classrooms Program are delivered at grade level. The courses are taught at a rigorous pace to ensure that the course content is fully covered in the scheduled timeframe, and students are expected to meet all of the Learning Standards outlined in the BC curriculum.

If students are not yet ready for that level of rigor and challenge in a particular subject area, the Connected Classrooms course may not be right for them until they have developed the necessary fundamental skills and understandings.

It can also be difficult for a virtual teacher to individualize lessons from a distance. While the virtual co-teachers will make every effort to make connections with students, the virtual environment means that the virtual co-teacher will be unable to interact and observe students as they normally would in an in-person setting.

Additionally, attendance problems can be more pronounced in the Connected Classrooms model. The nature of the Program means that students attend classes with peers from between three to six other schools. Classes must progress, as students in other schools are involved and need the learning to advance.

If students miss classes and fall behind, it can be difficult for a remote teacher to help them catch up. Support from the in-class co-teacher can assist in these situation, but the virtual model is different from a regular in-person classroom and regular absences can be an unusually acute challenge that is difficult to address.

If students do not have consistent attendance and a strong foundation in the fundamentals of the subject area, they will not be successful without intensive support.

It is important that schools joining Connected Classrooms are fully committed to supporting their students with regular attendance, and providing tutoring / assistance for students who may experience difficulties.

**If they are going to access math courses, have our students completed the math Moodle assessment to determine their readiness?**

Students should have sufficient foundational math skills to be successful in Foundations and Precalculus 10. An assessment is available on the Connected Classrooms Moodle that schools can use as a tool to determine where students need additional instruction to prepare for Math 10. It would be best if schools could have students complete the Moodle in May and June of their grade 9 year, and provide instruction where necessary to prepare students for Math 10.

### **Will the students be comfortable given the Connected Classrooms format?**

The Connected Classrooms Program is, by definition, technology based. If students are not comfortable being seen or speaking on camera, they may be uncomfortable participating in the Program classes, which could negatively affect their success. The virtual and on-site co-teachers will do everything possible to help students increase their comfort participating in a virtual classroom, but for a few students the Connected Classrooms environment may not work well.

### **What happens if a student tries a Connected Classrooms mathematics course and is not being successful?**

If a student is experiencing difficulty soon after a Connected Classrooms mathematics course begins, the virtual co-teacher and on-site co-teacher will do their utmost to help the student achieve success. However, if the efforts are not effective and the student can transfer to another Connected Classrooms course and achieve more success, that option will be considered and used if possible.

### **In the case of adult students, do they have appropriate behaviours / life skills to be in a classroom with high school students?**

When possible, courses will be offered specifically for adult students only, but in some cases low adult student enrollment numbers will require that adult and school-aged students are enrolled in a class together.

In these situations, it is important to be aware that adult students have more life experience than high schools students and, due to the collaborative nature of this Program, they must be mindful of any younger students in the class and must be able to demonstrate an ability to be appropriate around high school aged teens. If an adult student struggles with boundaries, language use, and respectful discourse that is appropriate for a classroom environment, Connected Classrooms may not be suited for their particular needs and circumstances. The safety, comfort, and success of all enrolled students, including students of all genders and sexual identities, must be the paramount consideration for the Connected Classrooms Program and all participants.

- 
- School staff should thoughtfully consider whether this learning format is right for individual students given their unique learning preferences and characteristics, and school staff are encouraged to explore other options if a student will likely not be successful in a Connected Classrooms course.
  - In addition, recognizing the limitations of any virtual delivery model – even using real-time instruction – in comparison to a fully on-site option, having an on-site teacher for a course may be a preferable option if a school has more than five students who will be taking a course.

## STUDENT READINESS CHECKLIST

- Attends school 80% of the time
- Is reading at grade level
  - If not, there is a plan to support the student
- Has foundational math skills – i.e. basic algebra and basic calculation skills
  - If not, there is a plan to support the student
- Has basic computer skills – i.e. can login into email and can create a Word document or PowerPoint
- Has completed required courses (for example: the student has completed Science 10 before taking Chemistry 11)

## **ADDENDUM ONE**

### **CONNECTED CLASSROOMS STUDENT DISCIPLINE POLICY**

#### **Rationale**

Consistent, fair and respectful discipline is essential to the educational quality and effectiveness of the Connected Classrooms Program and to the safety and well being of all participating students. FNEESC and FNSEA will be fair, consistent, and respectful in handling of discipline related matters for the Connected Classrooms Program. Most discipline issues should be handled by participating schools by the on-site co-teacher and, if necessary, school principal. When matters have been addressed, participating school staff will inform the virtual co-teacher of the resolution. Only matters that cannot be satisfactorily addressed at that level will be dealt with by FNEESC and FNSEA.

#### **Policy**

Good planning, active and engaging learning, and good classroom management are the keys to prevent student discipline problems. Connected Classrooms on-site co-teachers and virtual co-teachers will make every effort to achieve those goals to prevent problems from arising.

When problems do arise, the following procedures will be followed.

#### 9.1 Minor infractions

9.1.1 The following behaviours will be handled by the on-site co-teacher and, if necessary, school principal.

- Minor teasing / name calling of any students in the virtual classroom
- Incomplete homework
- Talking out of turn / monopolizing screen time
- Inappropriate clothing
- Inappropriate use of electronic devices (such as cell phones etc.)
- Being unprepared for class

#### ***Procedures:***

- Step 1: Verbal reminder to the student of the expected appropriate behaviours.
- Step 2: Consequence applied by on-site co-teacher. (If student complies / makes amends, procedures end here).
- Step 3: If student does not comply / make amends, home contact by the on-site co-teacher (if student is school-age) and notification to the school principal.

#### 9.2 Mid-level infractions

9.2.1 The following behaviours will be initially handled by the classroom teacher on-site co-teacher and, if necessary, school principal, with consultation with FNEESC staff if they become chronic.

- Persistent lateness
- Cheating
- Persistent non-attendance

- Persistent and disrespectful teasing / name calling of any students in the virtual classroom
- Disrespecting the virtual or on-site co-teachers

**Procedures:**

- Step 1: Verbal reminder to the student of the expected appropriate behaviours.
- Step 2: Consequence applied by on-site co-teacher. (If student complies / makes amends, procedures end here).
- Step 3: If student does not comply / make amends, home contact by the on-site co-teacher (if student is school-age) and notification to the school principal.

9.3 Major infractions

9.3.1 The following behaviours, among other serious matters, will be immediately referred to the school principal, and if necessary the School Governing Authority, and to FNEC and FNSA.

- Verbal aggression toward any other Connected Classrooms Program students or staff
- Persistent and disrespectful defiance.
- Smoking while participating in a Connected Classrooms class.
- Drug and/or alcohol use evident to the Connected Classrooms students and staff.
- Threat / intimidation of others.
- Sexual misbehaviour.
- Persistent use of inappropriate language -- profanity, language of a sexual nature, anti-Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity (SOGI) comments, etc.
- Sexual or any other type of harassment of other students or staff.

**Procedures:**

- Step 1: Referral to the school principal.
- Step 2: Home contact by the school principal (if school age).
- Step 3: Meeting with parents/guardians (if school age).
- Step 4: Appropriate restoration before student is permitted to continue in the class.

If the matter cannot be solved through interventions cooperatively determined by the student's school and FNEC and FNSA, FNEC and FNSA reserve the right to withdraw the student.

The above are general guidelines only. In any case of student discipline, regard will be had for the age and developmental stage or other specific circumstances relevant to the particular student.

## Connected Classrooms Program Student Code of Conduct

Students must represent themselves in a manner that is consistent with the expectations of their school and community, while respecting the Code of Conduct of Connected Classrooms. The first priority for all students who participate in the Connected Classrooms Program is learning and completion of the course requirements. To ensure participants are successful in the program, students are expected to demonstrate the following attitudes and maintain the following standards of conduct.

- Students must always be prepared to participate and engage in the Connected Classrooms learning opportunities, including:
  - Regularly attending and participating in classes.
  - Being logged on and ready to learn at the designated class start time.
  - Following the instructions of the class co-teachers, class rules, and Connected Classrooms Program procedures at all times.
  - Making every effort to complete assignments and course work according to course deadlines and expectations.
  - Dressing appropriately.
- If missing a class is unavoidable, students are responsible to catch up on missed learning – including seeking assistance from the co-teachers as needed.
- Safe, respectful, and inclusive language and behaviours must be used at all times.
  - All students are expected to interact with the class co-teachers and other students in a friendly, courteous manner.
  - Students are encouraged to communicate openly and proactively with the program co-teachers if they need assistance or have concerns about the course material, their progress, or any other matters that may negatively impact their success in the course.
  - Students must not cause distractions for others or interfere with the teacher’s instruction, and they must not interrupt the learning of their fellow students.
  - Students must never engage in bullying or harassing behaviours at any time.
  - Students should encourage each other and use positive language; they should never use profanity, make comments that are sexual and/or discriminatory, tease, ridicule, or respond to other students in hurtful or negative ways.
  - If students are aware of others behaving in a bullying or harassing manner, they should report the problem to a co-teacher or other staff of their school as soon as possible.



I understand and I commit to the Connected Classrooms Student Code of Conduct.

Name:

Signature: