

## Tips for Schools

---

### Background.....

---

The Ministry system assigns or matches PENs to students through a complicated algorithm and points system. If the students submitted do not have enough points for PEN match or assignment they will appear as errors, allowing us to review the demographics and select a match or assign a new PEN. However, if the student submitted has all demographics in the correct fields the system will assign a PEN automatically, or choose an existing one from the database. Below are a number of tips to assist you when submitting your documentation to the ministry to update a record in our system or for things to consider when entering a student for a PEN Request. This will allow us to process your request efficiently and with the least chance for misinterpretation.

### Tips when sending us Legal Documentation.....

---



**TIP 1** - Please include your name, phone and fax number on the fax cover sheet. This enables the Ministry to contact you directly if a question should arise.



**TIP 2** - Please ensure that you have included your Ministry school code and your full school name on the fax cover sheet. This assists the Ministry in processing your request promptly.



**TIP 3** - Documentation often comes through unclear or dark. Always write the students PEN on legal documentation you are faxing or emailing to us or create a label and stick your interpretation of the students name to the document you are faxing to us, including the following information:

PEN#:

Legal Surname:

Legal First Name:

Legal Middle:

Usual First:

Usual Middle:

Usual Last:



**TIP 4** - Never use highlighter on any portion of the documentation as this renders the text illegible once it has gone through a fax machine. We can also accept scanned documentation via email to [PENS.Coordinator@gov.bc.ca](mailto:PENS.Coordinator@gov.bc.ca)



**TIP 5** - If the student has multiple PEN numbers please submit both PEN numbers. This allows us to do a quick search of the database and resolve the problem immediately.

## Examples.....

Below are examples of how the Ministry would like to receive data. All names used in the examples are pretend!

- EX - 1: FIRST AND MIDDLE NAME IN COLUMN 2

### THIS IS INCORRECT

1. Legal Surname SMITH	2. Legal Given Name JOSEPH ANDREW	3. Legal Given Name
---------------------------	--------------------------------------	---------------------

### THIS IS CORRECT

1. Legal Surname SMITH	2. Legal Given Name JOSEPH	3. Legal Given Name ANDREW
---------------------------	-------------------------------	-------------------------------

- EX - 2: TWO PART LEGAL ASIAN NAME WITH A USUAL CANADIAN NAME

### THIS IS INCORRECT (unless documentation exists to prove otherwise)

1. Legal Surname CHAN	2. Legal Given Name SIU - WAN	3. Legal Given Name GEORGE
--------------------------	----------------------------------	-------------------------------

### THIS IS CORRECT

1. Legal Surname CHAN	2. Legal Given Name SIU-WAN	3. Legal Given Name
4. Usual Surname	5. Usual Given Name (if different) GEORGE	6. Usual Given Name (if different)

- EX - 3: HYPHENATED SURNAME

### THIS IS INCORRECT

1. Legal Surname SMITH - TORE	2. Legal Given Name DAVID	3. Legal Given Name JOHN
----------------------------------	------------------------------	-----------------------------

ALTHOUGH HYPHENATED SURNAMES DO EXIST WE WOULD PREFER THAT THE SURNAME BE SUBMITTED AS IT APPEARS ON THE STUDENT'S BIRTH CERTIFICATE. IF THE SURNAME IS HYPHENATED ON THE BIRTH CERTIFICATE THEN WE WILL ACCEPT IT. HOWEVER, IF ONLY ONE PART OF THE HYPHENATED NAME APPEARS ON THE BIRTH CERTIFICATE WE ASK THAT YOU ONLY SUBMIT THAT PART IN THE LEGAL SURNAME FIELD. YOU MAY THEN SUBMIT THE HYPHENATED NAME IN THE USUAL SURNAME FIELD. SEE BELOW FOR AN EXAMPLE.

### THIS IS CORRECT

1. Legal Surname SMITH	2. Legal Given Name DAVID	3. Legal Given Name JOHN
4. Usual Surname SMITH - TORE	5. Usual Given Name (if different)	6. Usual Given Name (if different)

- EX - 4: THREE PART LEGAL GIVEN NAME

### THIS IS INCORRECT

1. Legal Surname LEE	2. Legal Given Name GEORGE SIU-WAN	3. Legal Given Name
-------------------------	---------------------------------------	---------------------

### THIS IS CORRECT

1. Legal Surname LEE	2. Legal Given Name GEORGE	3. Legal Given Name SIU-WAN
-------------------------	-------------------------------	--------------------------------

## **Tips to consider when making your PEN Request.....**

---



**TIP 1** - Students may not have a middle name or may only have one name. In this case the Ministry asks that you submit a photocopy of the student's birth certificate along with the PEN request. This ensures that the student record contains a memo stating that he/she legally has no middle name or only one name.



**TIP 2** - When filling in the birth date field please ensure you follow the year (yyyy), month (mm), day (dd) format provided. (i.e. YYYY 1999 MM 01 DD 01 ).



**TIP 3** - When submitting gender for the student please indicate "M" or "F".



**TIP 4** - If the student has registered at, or attended a school in BC, it is likely the school already obtained a PEN. The Ministry asks that you obtain the students PR card (which contains a PEN) from the previous school.



**TIP 5** - Postal codes also help the Ministry differentiate between students. For example, two students may have very similar names and the same birth date, however, if the postal codes are different we have reason to believe that the students are not the same.

**If you have any further questions please feel free to contact the PEN Co-ordinator at the locations below:**

**Phone: (250) 356-8020**

**Fax: (250) 953-0450**

**E-mail: [PENS.Coordinator@gov.bc.ca](mailto:PENS.Coordinator@gov.bc.ca)**