
INFORMATION BULLETIN

For Immediate Release
2024AG0039-001196
Aug. 1, 2024

Ministry of Attorney General

Provincial court to use Cowichan Tribes laws for child and family services

VICTORIA – Cowichan Tribes will begin using its own laws and the B.C. provincial court to resolve child and family welfare matters involving Cowichan children.

Following a landmark co-ordination agreement between Cowichan Tribes, the Province of B.C. and the federal government, Cowichan Tribes now exercises jurisdiction over child and family services for its members living on Vancouver Island and the Gulf Islands.

A new set of provincial court rules has been co-developed with Cowichan Tribes to set out the procedures for the provincial court where a matter involving a Smun'eem (Cowichan child) is brought before the court under Cowichan Tribes' law, Snuw'uy'ulhtst tu Quw'utsun Mustimuhw u' tu Shhw'a'luqwa'a' i' Smun'eem (laws of the Cowichan people for families and children). The initial court registry for these matters is in Duncan.

This is the first time an Indigenous government in British Columbia has asserted jurisdiction over child and family services and will use the provincial court to hear matters under Indigenous law.

These changes are upholding Indigenous jurisdiction and helping address the over-representation of Indigenous children and youth in care while supporting important family connections.

Contact:

Ministry of Attorney General
Media Relations
250 896-5104

Connect with the Province of B.C. at: news.gov.bc.ca/connect