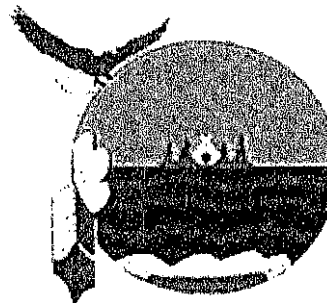


MIKISEW CREE FIRST NATION

Post-Secondary Student Support Program

Policy Manual



Revised 2010

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Mikisew Cree First Nation believes in ensuring that our member access funding and programs to pursue their aspirations at the post-secondary level to acquire the knowledge and skill required to become productive and contributing members, employable and independent as set forth in the mission statement.
- 1.2 Mikisew Cree First Nation asserts that post-secondary is a Treaty Right and nothing in this policy, adopted solely as an administrative tool, and abridges that right or the trust responsibility of the Government of Canada towards Treaty Indians.
- 1.3 Mikisew Cree First Nation believes in contributing something worthwhile to the Mikisew student by administering all student support programs efficiently and effectively and in such a way as to enhance student morale and motivation.
- 1.4 The purpose of the Student Support program is to encourage and support eligible Mikisew Cree First Nation members who are current Membership list to acquire university, technical institute, college, or professional qualifications so that they can become economically self-sufficient and develop their individual potential to further their own aims and contribute to the achievement of Mikisew self-government and economic self-reliance.
- 1.5 Mikisew Cree First Nation is the administering organization.
- 1.6 Mikisew Cree First Nation recognizes the need, in certain instances, to provide additional funding to students continuing their education in form of a student bursary. The educational incentive bursary (previously Machetak Foundation) is administered under this policy.
- 1.7 The University and College Entrance Preparation Programs are administered under this policy.
- 1.8 This policy is revised November 2010. and effective immediately. It replaces the previous policy effective May 2009. Which replaced the 1989 INAC policy previously administered by Athabasca Tribal Council and will apply to all students for the 2010-2011 academic years and beyond.
- 1.9 This manual provides policy directions for Mikisew Cree First Nation and where appropriate, forms the basis for operating guidelines for the guidance of administrative staff.
- 1.10 Mikisew Cree First Nation has the right to amend, delete and modify aspects of this policy to meet educational needs and on the availability of post-secondary funding.

1.11 Mikisew Cree First Nation will issue guidelines pursuant to this policy.

2. DEFINITIONS

In this document,

- 2.1 "Mikisew Member" means a person whose name has been entered in the Indian Register maintained by the Mikisew Cree First Nation and is a current Mikisew member.
- 2.2 "Mikisew Cree First Nation" is the administering organization.
- 2.3 "Mikisew Student Services" means the office that manages and oversees the delivery of the Post-Secondary Student Support Program (PSSSP).
- 2.4 "Post-Secondary Education" means a program of studies, offered by a postsecondary institution for which completion of secondary school studies or its equivalent is a prerequisite.
- 2.5 "Program of Studies" includes all post-secondary programs, at least one academic year in duration, leading to a certificate, diploma, or degree. Programs e.g., pre-law, less than one academic year which are prerequisites to post-secondary programs of a least one academic year in duration are included.
- 2.6 "Post-secondary institutions" are degree, diploma, and certificate granting institutions, which are recognized by provincial authorities and included educational institutions affiliated with or delivering accredited programs by arrangements with a post-secondary institution. Mikisew Cree First Nation will maintain a national list of recognized Canadian post-secondary institutions.
- 2.7 "Full time students" and "Part time students" are as defined by the post-secondary institution with the condition that wherever possible, full-time students are required to carry a minimum class load of 109 credit hours per semester.
- 2.8 "Academic year" is as defined by the post-secondary institution but will not be less than eight months duration.

- 2.11 "Semester" refers to a part of the academic year, as defined by the post-secondary institution. Semesters usually cover the periods from September to December, January to April, May to August.
- 2.12 "Dependent Spouse" means a person who is legally married or living with the student in a common-law relationship and who has lived with the student as husband or wife for a period of at least one year prior to the application for educational support. This person is dependent on the student and does not receive income in excess of the level of income allowed for a dependent spouse by Revenue Canada.
- 2.13 "Dependent" means your child, grandchild, brother, or sister by blood, marriage, common-law partnership, or adoption and either under 18, or mentally or physically infirm. The dependent must be living with and supported by the student.
- 2.14 "Employed Spouse" applies to a legally married spouse or common-law spouse whereby a common-law spouse is a person who and had been living with you in such a relationship for lives with you in a common-law relationship at least 12 continuous months, income/level verification of and employed/dependent spouse may be required at the time of application whereby the following will apply, "If the employed spouse's gross income exceeds the top of the first income tax bracket used for tax purposes by Canada Revenue Agency, then the student will receive the single rate only."
- 2.15 "Employed student" means a student who is also earning employment income. If the employed student gross income exceeds the top of the first income tax bracket used for tax purposes my Canada Revenue Agency, then the student will not be eligible for Living Allowance and will receive support for tuition and books only.
- 2.16 "CEGEP" is an abbreviation of college d'Ensignment General et Professional. CEGEPs operate in Quebec.
- 2.17 "Contingency Funding" means financial support provided to students for costs related to emergency or other situations.
- 2.18 "University and College Entrance Preparation" (UCEP) are programs offered by Canadian universities and community colleges for students to attain the academic level required for entrance to degree and diploma credit programs.
- 2.19 "Pre-Tech Programs" like university Entrance Programs (UEP) are recognized programs designed to provide students who have grade 12 marks below those normally required to entrance into Level 1 programs of studies or who are short subjects, usually in the sciences, required for entry into Level 1 programs.

- 2.20 "Home Study" means courses of study through correspondence at the student's home. These courses must be in a recognized post-secondary institution. Students taking home study are considered part-time.

3. ELIGIBILITY

- 3.1 The student must be a member of the Mikisew Cree First Nation whose name appears on the current membership list.
- 3.2 The student must have met university or college entrance requirements and have been enrolled or accepted for enrolment in a post-secondary institution for a program of studies.
- 3.3 The student must be enrolled in a program of at least one academic year duration that leads to a recognized certificate, diploma, or degree and which normally has grade 12 as an entrance requirement.
- 3.4 To be eligible to receive support as a UCEP student, an applicant:
- 3.4.1 Must be accepted for enrolment in a UCEP program of a Canadian post-secondary institution.
 - 3.4.2 Must provide a statement from the post-secondary institution offering the UCEP Program that:
 - 3.4.2.1 The student can attain the academic level for university or college entrance within the period of 1.5 academic years or 3 semesters.
 - 3.4.3 At the time of enrolment in the UCEP program the application must have attained a minimum of five one-year courses at the grade 11 level or the equivalent from the following subject areas: English/French, a second Language, Mathematics, History, Geography, Social Studies, Chemistry, Physics and Biology. A student possessing a solid grade 10 in math, Social Studies and English and scoring adequately on a Canadian Adult Achievement Test (CAAT) may also qualify for UCEP.
 - 3.4.4 A student enrolled in a computer assisted learning center, which is not accredited or officially recognized by Alberta Education, to attain a grade 12, will not be eligible for funding under this program.
- 3.5 Support will be provided within the limits of funds provided in accordance with Mikisew Cree First Nation funding arrangements, If demand for funding exceeds availability of funds, then applications will be deferred according to prioritization rules set out in section 4 and in the PSSSP Operating Guidelines.

- 3.6 Applications must be received at Mikisew Student services by the deadline dates set in PSSSP Operating Guidelines including June 30 for a September start date and November 15 for a January start date.

4. PRIORITIES FOR APPROVAL OF APPLICATIONS

Priorities for approval of applications for student living expenses shall be based on the following categories with Priority 1 being the first set of applications to be approved, Priority 2 to be second considered, Priority 3 to be the third considered and so forth.

Only complete applications received within the deadline dates will be considered for the current intake.

PSSSP Operating Guidelines may modify these categories to accord with the types of applications received for any specific intake or to accommodate specific Mikisew Cree First Nation initiatives.

Priority 1 - Continuing Students

Continuing students with minimum grade average requirements for program completion, and students continuing their studies from the current academic year without a break (not including summer break between academic years).

Priority 2 - Regular Grade 12 Students

Students who have successfully completed their high school education or academic upgrading during the previous year and have been accepted into a post-secondary institution.

Priority 3 - Returning Student:

Student returning after break in studies, (including students who withdrew due to medical reasons [documented] previously by Mikisew Student Services and/or maternity leave).

Priority 4 - Mature Students

a) Students starting their studies after a break from High School.

4 b) Mature students who can go directly into post-secondary studies and who have been accepted in certificate, diploma, or degree programs under the category of "mature student".

Priority 5- UCEP, UEP, and/or Pre-Tech students

- a) Students with grade 12: Students who need to complete prerequisites to pursue subsequent post-secondary education, these are students who have graduated and who need a UCEP semester or year to meet requirements of a post-secondary institution.

- b) Students without grade 12: Students who need to complete prerequisites to pursue subsequent post-secondary education and who will attend preparation programs to a maximum duration of 1.5 academic years (3 semesters).

5. LIMITS OF SUPPORT

- 5.1 Support for travel and living expenses will be provided for four levels of postsecondary education and limits are placed on the duration of support according to the level of programs in which the student is enrolled.

Level I: Technical Institution, CEGEP or Community College Programs: 2 academic years depending on the institution's normal program duration.

Level II: University Undergraduate Programs (i.e.-B.A., B.Ed., B.Sc.) 4 Academic years based on the university's normal program duration.

Level III: University Professional Programs (M.D.) and Postgraduate Programs (M.A., M Ed., Ph.D.): Duration of support will be in accordance with *A.U* the university's normal program duration, however reasonable limits may be 24 months established on the basis of individual need. All applicants will be dealt with on an individual basis.

Level IV: University or College Entrance Preparation Programs; maximum of 3 semesters.

- 5.2 Duration of assistance will be in accordance with the minimum full-time requirements of the program as defined by the post-secondary institution.
- 5.3 Students in Level I may be assisted for up to one additional **semester** for authorized and documented medical, academic, or personal reasons. Students in Level II and III may be assisted for up to one additional **year** for the same reasons mentioned above. Those applicants who request more than one additional year will be referred to the Funding Appeal Process prior to approval of additional funding.
- 5.4 Level III funding arrangements will be dealt with on an individual basis and arrangements will depend upon the support and institution; however, maximum cumulative total years of support.
- 5.5 Students who transfer programs more than once require approval of the Education Committee prior to approval of additional funding.
- 5.6 Where students change programs within one of the levels, the academic time used for each program within this level will be counted for support purposes.
- 5.7 Students who become eligible for support and who have previously completed a portion of post-secondary studies without support from this program will receive support for the balance of their program of studies or up to the limit of eligibility.

- 5.8 Support will be approved for a university academic year, which is normally eight months. On-campus students may be supported in Intercession/summer School if funding permits. Students for whom intercession or summer school attendance is a compulsory aspect of their program will receive normal levels of support for these sessions. Support for students attending other post-secondary institutions. Eg. NAIT, will be for the normal academic year as set by the institution. Students will be required to re-apply for support annually.
- 5.9 Tuition and book support will be provided to eligible students enrolled in all four levels in accordance with 6.1.

6. TYPES OF SUPPORT AND ASSISTANCE

6.1 Tuition and Books

- 6.1.1 This includes fees and costs relating to registration, tuition, books. Which are required by the institution based on policy limits and the submission of receipts.
- 6.1.2 Mikisew Student Services is not responsible for health and dental fees charged by institutions. It is the student's responsibility to opt out of these services.
- 6.1.3 Students enrolled in foreign post-secondary institutions will be eligible for tuition support at no higher than the rate charged by the public institution nearest to the student's Canadian place of residence, which offers a comparable program at the time of application. All funds will be in Canadian dollars.
- 6.1.4 Students who receive scholarships or bursaries to attend post-secondary institutions will be eligible for funding from the PSSSP as required to meet their tuition, travel, or living costs not fully covered by the scholarship or bursary. All regulations governing eligible students, program and institutions must be met. Each case will be considered individually.
- 6.1.5 Students who have completed a program of study in Level I, II, or III and who wish to pursue a second certificate diploma or degree may be eligible for funding for tuition and books only depending on the availability of funds.

6.2 Travel

- 6.2.1 Students will be eligible for travel support for one round trip per semester for the student and dependents if their permanent address is different from their study address, at a rate established in PSSSP Operating Guidelines. Out of province students will receive travel support at the same rate they would receive if they were attending the provincial public post-secondary institution nearest to their permanent homes offering a comparable program.

6.3 Part time Studies

- 6.3.1 When a student in attendance at a post-secondary institution study for what is termed less than full-time by the institution which offers the program, that student will be eligible for assistance to pay for books and tuition fees only.

6.4 Living Allowance

- 6.4.1 The living allowance rate structure and entitlement will be set annually in Operating Guidelines. For the current year the rates are attached to this Handbook as Appendix 1.
- 6.4.2 Living allowance rates may be supplemented to reflect the added costs of rent for those area/cities designated as high-cost rent areas in the annual Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation rental survey.
- 6.4.3 Required school registration and school supplies allowance will be paid to a student on behalf of dependents attending public schools in the community where the parent is attending a post-secondary institution. The rates are set in Operating Guidelines. The name of the school the child is attending may also be required.

- 6.4.4 Required daily bus transportation allowance will be paid to a student on behalf of dependents who must use public transportation to attend schools in the community where the parent is attending a post-secondary institution. Funding for 6.4.3 and 6.4.4 are included in and will not exceed the level provided in 6.4.7.
- 6.4.5 Income level verification of an employed/dependent spouse may be required at the time of application.
- 6.4.6 Allowances will not be provided for regular clothing which students are expected to purchase from their living allowances. However, some courses and institutions require special uniforms or safety equipment for using/operating tools. These items may be funded if the institution provided written verification that the program requires them.
- 6.4.7 A childcare subsidy of \$100 per dependent will be paid to students with dependents. This subsidy will be paid to eligible students in September. This is to assist with school registration or other school fees.
- 6.4.8 Students may qualify for a daycare subsidy for their children that are in
• certified daycares or day homes. An additional \$200 per family may be provided to those families that can show that they are paying extremely high parent portions due to high daycare fees.

6.5 Allowance for Special Needs Students

- 6.5.1 Students with special needs (i.e., physically disabled persons) requiring additional assistance related to their post-secondary programs shall have their request considered on an individual basis.
- 6.5.2 The assessment of special needs will be carried out by the Education Committee in collaboration with the student services staff of the institution to be attended and the concerned special needs student.
- 6.5.3 If the special needs student wishes to appeal the decision normal appeal process provisions will apply.

6.6 Contingency Assistance

6.6.1 Contingency assistance may be paid subject to the availability of funds to eligible full-time PSSSP students to assist with costs associated with emergency or special situations not covered by other provisions of this policy. Contingency assistance may be provided for situations that include, but are not necessarily limited to the following:

- Graduation expenses up to \$500 upon submission of receipts.
- Practicum/internship assistance (additional childcare needs)
- Program orientation
- Internship seminars
- Rental of specialized equipment designated by the post-secondary institution.
- Other costs of an extraordinary nature.

6.6.2 Provision of contingency assistance will be subject to the availability of funds in the PSSSP

7. INCENTIVES AND SCHOLARSHIP

The Mikisew Cree First Nation may decide to award incentives and scholarships and establish a process for administration subject to the availability of funds.

7.4 Any incentives and scholarships programs established by the Mikisew Cree First Nation will be publicly advertised among students.

7.5 All incentives and awards to students will be awarded on receipt of confirmation of marks and completion of level.

8. **ACCOUNTABILITY**

8.1 Every effort should be made by the Mikisew Student services to recover overpayment to students who misuse funding by not fulfilling the terms of the PSSSP or who misrepresent their marital, dependent or program status on the application.

8.2 By signing and submitting the application for funding, the student hereby specifically authorizes the deduction and recovery of any overpayments from withholding of any amounts due *to* the student from the Mikisew Cree First Nation including land claim distribution payments.

8.3 When misuse of post-secondary funds is discovered, Mikisew Student Services will adopt the following procedures:

- Write a letter *to* the student stating the findings and outlining the corrective course of action that will be taken.
- The student can choose to respond.
- If the corrective action does not occur or is not completed. Mikisew Student Services will suspend the student from further funding.
- The student will be written a letter stating that they have been suspended and are now deemed to be in default.
- Students who abuse the PSSSP sponsoring guidelines will be required to repay any overpayments by arrangement that is satisfactory *to* Mikisew Student Services, including withholding of amounts due from the Mikisew Cree First Nation, specifically including land claim payments (see 8.2 above).

- Advise the student that future funding may be affected by any overpayment of PSSSP funds.
- The student will not be able to apply for sponsorship for 1 year after being deemed to be in default.
- The next time that the student applies for funding they will apply with a priority 8 -previous withdrawals.
- Students that are in default with Mikisew Student Services may still qualify for funding providing they can agree to a repayment plan.

8.4 An annual report and financial review of post-secondary funds will be made available on request to current post-secondary students.

9. FUNDING APPEAL PROCESS

To ensure fairness and equitable treatment an appeal process is contained within the PSSSP to enable students to appeal decisions made by the Coordinator of Mikisew Student Services.

- 9.1 Every student has a right to reasonably appeal a coordinator's decision regarding funding, however, when a student application has been refused because available funds are fully committed; this appeal process will not be considered.
- 9.2 The matter, if unresolved after discussion with the coordinator can be appealed to the Director, Community Services.
- 9.3 If the issue is still not resolved, the Education Committee can hear the student's appeal.
- 9.4 Policies and Operating Guidelines should be strictly followed in review of the appeal.

10. GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES

- 10.1 If a student or a group of students have a grievance regarding post-secondary education that is not about funding, the grievance procedure shall be as follows:
- 10.2 The student(s) submit(s), a written report and supporting documentation to the Mikisew Education Committee.

- 10.3 The Mikisew Education Committee has 14 days from the receipt of the report to make their decision. It is understood that a decision can be rendered/recommended in less than 14 days.
- 10.4 If the grievance is not resolved to the satisfaction of the student(s), the Mikisew Education Committee must submit the grievance to the Mikisew Cree First Nation Chief and Council. Their decision, which is final on all parties, must be made at their next scheduled meeting.
- 10.5 If at any of these steps, the student(s) presence is requested, student(s) travel expenses may be reimbursed or covered according to Operating Guidelines rates.

11. OBLIGATIONS OF STUDENTS

- 11.1 It is understood that the PSSSP is intended to provide support for students with a serious intent to succeed in post-secondary education. Expectations are that the student will attend classes regularly and generally apply themselves to their studies. Students are expected to conduct themselves to bring credit to their peers and to themselves. Detailed obligations of students and the administering organization may be spelled out in operating guidelines and related documents.
- 11.2 Students will be dealt with fairly and equitably under the PSSSP and are expected to apply themselves fairly and equitably in relation to the Mikisew Student Services staff.
- 11.3 If the student indicates the possibility of unsuccessful completion in his/her studies, through his/her performance or other, and if this opinion is communicated through the institution being attended, then it may be necessary to terminate the student's support.
- 11.4 Students must pass 75% of their course load to continue their sponsorship.
- 11.5 Students must attend a minimum of 75% of the classroom hours and/or instructional hours required for the course of study.
- 11.5 Students have access to the appeal and grievance processes outlined in sections 9 and 10 of this policy manual.

12. OBLIGATIONS OF MIKISEW STUDENT SERVICES

- 12.1 Mikisew Student Services will clearly set out obligations in the student policy and related documents such as a student handbook.

13. STUDENT REGISTRY

13.1 Mikisew Student Services will maintain documentation with respect to students identifying information, academic record and support provided. Disclosure of academic information requires the informed consent of the student. Personal information is subject to the terms of privacy provisions.

13.2 Mikisew Student Services will maintain a student registry for statistical submission purposes to INAC.

14. POLICY REVIEWS

14.1 There shall be policy review bi- annually.

14.2 Normal Mikisew Cree First Nation policy review procedures shall apply

15. APPLICATION PROCESS

15.1 Applying to the Post-Secondary Institution

15.1.1 Applying for enrolment to the post-secondary institution and program is the STUDENT'S RESPONSIBILITY and the rules are set by the institutions. Students can get help from their school counseling staff.

15.2 Applying for PSSSP Funding

15.2.1 Deadline Dates: Fully completed Application Forms and related Documentation must be received at Mikisew Student Services by the following dates:

- For Fall Semester (September) commencement: June 30th
- For Winter Semester (January) commencement: November 15
- For intersession/Summer Enrolment: Special conditions apply so contact Mikisew Student Services Coordinator for information.

- 15.2.2 Documentation required prior to final approval of the student's application for support will generally include the following:
- Letter of acceptance from the post-secondary institution
 - Copy of student's treaty/status card
 - Copy of Alberta Health Care cards for self and dependents if any
 - Transcript of marks for previous year (grade 12 for new applicants)
 - Additional documentation may be required in specific areas
 - SIN number

- 15.2.3 Getting PSSSP Application Forms: These will be made available through email MCFN website by contacting Mikisew Student Services.

- 15.2.4 The Education Committee will meet to review and accept eligible student applications not later than 14 days following the student application

15.3 **Notification**

- 15.3.1 Mikisew Student Services will advise the applicant as soon as possible about the decision made regarding their application.

- 15.3.2 Students who receive further information such as acceptance by their chosen post-secondary institution or any other relevant information such as marks, should immediately provide Mikisew Student Services with the original or a certified copy of the documents which will be returned to the student on written request.

Mikisew Student Services Living Allowance Rates 2010/11

<u>Marital Status</u>	<u>L.A</u>
Married with Employed Spouse	\$1,200.00-
One Dependent.....	\$1,325.00
Two Dependents.....	\$1,500.00
Three Dependents.....	\$1,680.00
Additional Dependent	\$50.00
Married with Dependent Spouse	\$1,440.00
One Dependent.....	\$1,605.00
Two Dependents	\$1,780.00
Three Dependents	\$1,945.00
Additional: Dependent	\$50.00
Single Parent	
One Dependent.....	\$1,605.00
Two Dependents	\$1,780.00
Three Dependents	\$1,945.00
Additional Dependent\$	\$50.00

Employment Income Guidelines:

Married students with Employed Spouse:

Employment income less than the top of the first income tax bracket used for tax purposes by Canada Revenue Agency the above rates apply

Employment income more than the top of the first income tax bracket used for tax purposes by Canada Revenue Agency student will receive the single rate.

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Program Completion Incentives

Completion of High School	\$ 100
Completion of a Certificate program (1 year of college level)	\$200
Completion of a Diploma program (2 years college level)	\$300
Completion of a bachelor's degree (4 years university level)	\$500
Completion of a master's degree (2 years university graduate studies)	\$1,000
Completion of a Doctorate Degree (additional year graduate studies)	\$ 1,500

To be eligible student must graduate with a year