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Introduction

The Importance of Getting a Student’s Name Right

Getting a student’s name right is the first step in welcoming him or her to school. Staff members who work with student-level data also know the importance of accurately and consistently recording a student’s name in order to track student data over time, match files across data sets, and make meaning from the data.

For students whose home language is not English, properly recording their information can be more difficult. School personnel who register students may not be familiar with different naming conventions in languages other than English. For example, Chinese, Korean, and Vietnamese names usually list the family name first, followed by the given name. Typically, Russian male and female last names have different endings, so a brother and sister may use slightly different versions of the same name. Incorrectly entering student names can mean that the same student is listed in different databases in various ways and often with incomplete records. Consequently, students who are eligible for services (e.g., English learner support) can be unidentified or overlooked.

What Are the Naming Conventions Reference Guides?

This set of naming conventions reference guides can help you accurately enter students’ names in school, district, and state databases.* The guides are currently available for students with home languages of Arabic, Chinese, Hindi, Korean, Russian, Somali, Spanish, Tagalog, Ukrainian, Urdu, and Vietnamese.

In addition to facilitating accurate data entry, these guides can ensure that school and district staff (e.g., front office staff and registrars) address and greet parents and other family members in a culturally responsive and respectful fashion.

How To Use the Naming Conventions Reference Guides

The naming conventions reference guides provide a general overview of the naming practices in a given language (Arabic, Chinese, Hindi, Korean, Russian, Somali, Spanish, Tagalog, Ukrainian, Urdu, and Vietnamese).

Each guide will help school and district staff become more familiar with what to expect when they encounter students from these cultural backgrounds: for example, the number of given names or family names, the order of these names, and where the names might fit into common database fields. The reference guides also provide guidance on how to politely address parents.

*Based on stakeholder requests, this second edition of Getting It Right (REL 2016-158 v2) adds naming conventions for three languages—Arabic, Hindi, and Korean—and replaces Cantonese with Chinese and Punjabi with Urdu. The latter decisions were made based on the similarity of naming conventions across a wide range of Chinese dialects, and between Punjabi and Urdu. The first edition of this report was published in June 2016 (REL 2016-158).
For each language, a single-page, double-sided, user-friendly guide features:

1. What you need to know: a brief overview of the naming conventions in a specific language.
2. Addressing parents, students, and families: appropriate ways to address family members whose language is other than English.
3. Registering students: rules on how to register students.
4. Examples: a visual representation of how to enter some typical names.
5. Remember: additional guidance on naming conventions in a specific language.

At the end of this guide are reference cards with examples of how to identify first, middle, and last names in each language. The reference cards offer a quick guide to the naming structures prevalent in each of the 11 languages featured in the set.

**Additional Considerations**

The naming conventions reference sheets, along with the deck of reference cards, are designed to provide guidance to school and district staff; however, we strongly recommend that all staff use a qualified interpreter if they are unable to communicate clearly with parents and students. Because naming practices within a single language group can vary, staff members are encouraged to use the information in these sheets to ask parents and families questions about their students’ names.

District or school staff members who register students should come to an agreement with parents on a name that respects both their cultural traditions and the constraints of the database. The name should be written out and provided to the families and students in a notice written in the family’s home language, indicating that this is the name that will be used officially at school. Doing so will help schools ensure that student names are accurately recorded throughout their school careers.
Naming Conventions Reference Guides
Arabic Naming Conventions Reference Guide

What you need to know*

- Arabic names consist of a first name and, usually, a last name. They may also include the name of a father or grandfather.
- Arabic first names may have two or more parts. For example, Abd al-Kareem is one first name, not a first name and a middle name.
- Arabic last names are often preceded by articles, such as el or al (the) and may have hyphens. These articles should always be included with the last names. For example, al-Badour.
- Arabic names often include the father’s and grandfather’s names (patronymics), which may be combined with bin, ibn, or bint (son or daughter of). For example, ibn Hammad. These names are often placed in the middle name field, but some parents may prefer them to be added to the end of the first name.
- Children typically take the father’s last name.
- Women do not usually change their last name upon marrying, so married parents may have different last names.

Addressing parents, students, and families

- Parents should be addressed using their last name, so Muhammad bin Hussain El Asad should be addressed as Mr. El Asad, and Zeinab bint Ali Al-Balawi as Mrs. Al-Balawi. It is also acceptable to refer to parents with the husband’s last name, as in Mr. and Mrs. El Asad.
- Physical contact between males and females is not considered appropriate in some Arabic speaking cultures unless individuals are related. Shaking hands with the opposite gender is acceptable only when a woman extends her hand first. It is best to follow this practice unless the person indicates otherwise.
- When sending written materials to families, address them as follows:
  - To the parents of Hassan El Asad
  - To the El Asad family

For example

A father introduces himself as Adnan Ahmed al-Ganem. A mother introduces herself as Houda Abd al Rahman al-Deeb, their son is Ismail Adnan al-Ganem, and daughter is Sahar Adnan al-Ganem. Address the father as Mr. al-Ganem and the mother as Mrs. al-Deeb.

*First names are in semibold, middle names are in italics, and last names are in heavy throughout this guide.
Family example

Father:  Adnan Ahmed al-Ganem
First name: Adnan
Middle name: Ahmed
Last name: al-Ganem

Mother:  Houda Abd al Rahman al-Deeb
First name: Houda
Middle name: Abd al Rahman
Last name: al-Deeb

Son:  Ismail Adnan al-Ganem
First name: Ismail
Middle name: Adnan
Last name: al-Ganem

Daughter:  Sahar Adnan al-Ganem
First name: Sahar
Middle name: Adnan
Last name: al-Ganem

Additional examples

Student:  Qassim al-Masri
First name: Qassim
Middle name: 
Last name: al-Masri

Student:  Muhammad ibn Ahmad al-Amour
First name: Muhammad
Middle name: ibn Ahmad
Last name: al-Amour

Student:  Nasra Idris al Ayoob
First name: Nasra
Middle name: Idris
Last name: al Ayoob

Student:  Zahra bint Muhammad Abu Saad
First name: Zahra
Middle name: bint Muhammad
Last name: Abu Saad

Remember

Naming practices vary among Arabic speakers, and this guide provides only a general overview.

There are often several ways of spelling the same name. For example, the name Mohammed may also be written as Mohamed or Muhamad.

Use a qualified translator if you are not able to communicate clearly with the parents and student.

School staff members who register students should come to an agreement with parents on a name that respects both their cultural patterns and the constraints of the database. That name should be written out and provided to the family and student in a notice written in the family’s home language, indicating that this is the name that will be used officially at school. Doing so will help students and families remember to use the modified name in school settings.
Chinese
Naming Conventions Reference Guide

What you need to know*

- There are different varieties, or dialects, of Chinese. This guide describes naming conventions that apply to the most widely spoken dialects, such as Mandarin, Cantonese, and Hokkien.

- Chinese names typically consist of one given name, no middle name, and one family name. Chinese given names consist of one or two syllables. Depending on dialect and personal preference, two-syllable given names may be written as one word (Menglong), two words (Tiong Lai) or a hyphenated word (Chun-ying).

- Chinese family names are typically one syllable (Hu).

- The order of Chinese names is different from English. Family names are spoken and written first, followed by given names. This may be reversed when speaking and writing in English.

- Chinese speakers may also use an English given name, which may or may not be part of the legal name.

- Children typically take the father’s family name.

- Women typically retain their maiden name after marriage. Whether a woman is addressed as “Mrs.” (with husband’s name) or “Ms.” (with her own family name) is a matter of personal preference.

Addressing parents, students, and families

- If you do not know whether a mother is using her maiden name or her husband’s name, use “Ms.” with the mother’s name. However, using “Mrs.” with the husband’s family name is often equally acceptable, and it is common to address parents who appear in person together as “Mr. and Mrs.” followed by the husband’s family name.

- Children with an English given name are usually called by that name in school. If the student has both an English and Chinese given name, ask the student or the parents which name should be used in school.

- When sending written materials to families, address them as follows:
  - To the parents of Ivy Xiaoshuang Zhu
  - To the Zhu family

For example

A father introduces himself as Pan Shengjie. A mother introduces herself as Yang Lan, and the daughter is Sherry XiaoYu Pan. Address father as Mr. Pan and mother as Ms. Yang. Ask student or parents if student should be called Sherry or XiaoYu.

*First names are in semibold, and last names are in heavy throughout this guide.
Family example

Father: Pan Shengjie
   First name: Shengjie
   Middle name: 
   Last name: Pan

Mother: Yang Lan
   First name: Lan
   Middle name: 
   Last name: Yang

Daughter: Sherry Xiaoyu Pan
   First name: Sherry Xiaoyu
   Middle name: 
   Last name: Pan

Chinese speakers may also have English given names, which may or may not be part of their legal name. English given names are usually placed in front of a Chinese given name. Ask the student or parent which name should be used in school.

Additional examples

Student: Tiong Lai Liow
   First name: Tiong Lai
   Middle name: 
   Last name: Liow

Student: Anna Ching Yik Cheong
   First name: Anna Ching Yik
   Middle name: 
   Last name: Cheong

Remember

Naming practices vary among Chinese communities, and this guide provides only a general overview.

There are many different Chinese dialects and ways of transliterating Chinese names in English. As an example, the English expressions of the same name in Chinese include Zhang, Cheung, and Cheong.

Use a qualified translator if you are not able to communicate clearly with the parents and student.

School staff members who register students should come to an agreement with parents on a name that respects both their cultural patterns and the constraints of the database. That name should be written out and provided to the family and student in a notice written in the family’s home language, indicating that this is the name that will be used officially at school. Doing so will help students and families remember to use the modified name in school settings.
Hindi
Naming Conventions Reference Guide

What you need to know*

- Naming practices vary greatly among Hindi speakers depending on religion, region, and other characteristics, such as caste. This reference guide provides a general overview only for Hindi speakers who are Hindus (a religion).
- Hindi names typically consist of one or more first names and may also include one or more middle names. Most Hindi speakers will have last names.
- Hindi first and middle names may have two or more parts. For example, Chandra Shekhar is one first name and could also be written Chandrashekhar.
- Children typically take their father's last name as their last name. They may use their father's first name as their middle name.
- Women typically take their husband's last name after marriage, though some may keep their maiden name.

Addressing parents, students, and families

- Parents can be addressed by their last name preceeded by Mr. or Mrs., or by their first name followed by the suffix –ji (pronounced jee), so Gaurav Narain Gupta can be addressed as Mr. Gupta or Gaurav-ji and Rachna Gupta may be addressed as Mrs. Gupta or Rachna-ji.
- Some women may not be comfortable shaking hands with men. If they do not extend their hand, a simple “Hello” will suffice. It is appropriate for men to shake hands with each other.
- When sending written materials to families, address them as follows:
  - To the parents of Ankur Mathur
  - To the Mathur family

For example

A father's name is Rakesh Kumar Sharma. He may introduce himself as Rakesh Sharma, R.K. Sharma, or Rakesh. The mother's name is Sharmila Sharma. Their son's name is Chandra Shekhar Sharma, and the daughter's name is Gayatri Devi Sharma.

Registering students

1. Include all names in databases and documents.
2. Enter the last name in the last name field.
3. Work with a parent to identify first and/or middle names. A child may have multiple first names and no middle name.

*First names are in semibold, middle names are in italic, and last names are in heavy throughout this guide.
Family example

Father: **Rakesh Kumar Sharma**
- **First name**: Rakesh
- **Middle name**: Kumar
- **Last name**: Sharma

Mother: **Sharmila Sharma**
- **First name**: Sharmila
- **Middle name**:  
- **Last name**: Sharma

Son: **Chandra Shekhar Sharma**
- **First name**: Chandra Shekhar
- **Middle name**:  
- **Last name**: Sharma

Daughter: **Gayatri Devi Sharma**
- **First name**: Gayatri
- **Middle name**: Devi
- **Last name**: Sharma

Additional examples

Student: **Vikram Tiwari**
- **First name**: Vikram
- **Middle name**:  
- **Last name**: Tiwari

Student: **Shailendra Singh Chauhan**
- **First name**: Shailendra
- **Middle name**: Singh
- **Last name**: Chauhan

Student: **Malini Chauhan**
- **First name**: Malini
- **Middle name**:  
- **Last name**: Chauhan

Remember

Naming practices vary greatly among Hindi speakers depending on religion, region, and caste. This reference guide provides only a general overview for Hindu Hindi speakers.

Parents may be politely addressed using Mr. or Mrs. plus their last name, (for example, Mr. Sharma), or alternatively, using their first name with –ji appended, (for example, “Rakesh-ji” or “Sharmila-ji”).

Use a qualified translator if you are not able to communicate clearly with the parents and student.

School staff members who register students should come to an agreement with parents on a name that respects both their cultural patterns and the constraints of the database. That name should be written out and provided to the family and student in a notice written in the family’s home language, indicating that this is the name that will be used officially at school. Doing so will help students and families remember to use the modified name in school settings.
Korean Naming Conventions Reference Guide

What you need to know*

- Korean names typically consist of one family name and one given name.
- Korean given names typically consist of one or two syllables. Given names with two syllables can be written with or without a space or hyphen. For example, Sue-Jin, Suejin, or Sue Jin. Korean family names typically are one syllable.
- The order of Korean names is different from English. Family names are spoken and written first, followed by given names. This may be reversed when speaking and writing in English.
- Korean speakers may have both an English given name and a Korean given name. If a student has both names, ask parents to determine which name should be used in school. Sometimes when students have both Korean and English given names the Korean name may be placed in the middle name field.
- Typically, children adopt their father’s family name.
- Women do not typically change their family name upon marriage, and married parents usually have different family names. However, while obtaining U.S. citizenship some women may take their husband’s family name.

Addressing parents, students, and families

- Address parents as “Mr.” and “Mrs.” using their family name. Since women do not typically adopt their husband’s family name, it is appropriate to use different family names.
- When sending written materials to families, address them as follows:
  - To the parents of Gil Dong Kim
  - To the Kim family

For example

A father introduces himself as Kim Chul Sue, a mother introduces herself as Lee Hee-Sun, their son is Minsoo Kim, and their daughter is Jenny Jisun Kim. In this example, the parents introduce themselves with their family names first, but introduce their children with their given names first. Address the father as Mr. Kim and the mother as Mrs. Lee.

Registering students

1. Include all legal names in school databases and documents.
2. Ask parents to identify family name and given name. Place given name in the first name field and family name in the last name field.
3. If a student has an English name, ask a parent if it is part of the legal name and if it should be placed before or after the Korean given name.

*First names are in **semibold**, middle names are in *italic*, and last names are in **heavy** throughout this guide.
Family example

Father: Kim Chul Sue
First name: Chul Sue
Middle name: 
Last name: Kim

Mother: Lee Hee-Sun
First name: Hee-Sun
Middle name: 
Last name: Lee

Son: Minsoo Kim
First name: Minsoo
Middle name: 
Last name: Kim

Daughter: Jenny Jisun Kim
First name: Jenny Jisun
Middle name: 
Last name: Kim

Additional examples

Student: Joon Park
First name: Joon
Middle name: 
Last name: Park

Student: Soo-Min Erin Choi
First name: Erin
Middle name: Soo-Min
Last name: Choi

Student: Jung Woo Lee
First name: Jung Woo
Middle name: 
Last name: Lee

Korean speakers typically do not use middle names, but when students have both Korean and English names the Korean given name may be placed in the middle name field. Be sure to ask the parents what to do.

Remember

Naming practices vary among Korean speakers, and this guide provides only a general overview.

There are often several ways of spelling the same name. For example, the name Jee Sun Jeong may be written as Jiseon Jung or Jee-Seon Chung.

Use a qualified translator if you are not able to communicate clearly with the parents and student.

School staff members who register students should come to an agreement with parents on a name that respects both their cultural patterns and the constraints of the database. That name should be written out and provided to the family and student in a notice written in the family’s home language, indicating that this is the name that will be used officially at school. Doing so will help students and families remember to use the modified name in school settings.
Russian Naming Conventions Reference Guide

What you need to know*

- Russian names generally consist of a first name, middle name/patronymic, and a last name.
- Russian first names may be hyphenated: for example, Mariya-Viktoriya.
- Russian middle names are patronymics, which mean they combine the father’s first name with the suffix meaning the son or daughter of. The most common suffixes for men are –evich or –ovich and for women are –evna or –ovna.
- Male students adopt their father’s last name. Female students also adopt their father’s last name and add an –a to the last name.
- Typically men’s and women’s last names have different endings. Some women adopt their husband’s last name, adding –a to the name.

Addressing parents, students, and families

- Address parents as “Mr.” and “Mrs.” using the husband's last name. Mikhail Ivanovich Karlov and his wife Valentina Vladimirovna Karlova may be addressed as Mr. and Mrs. Karlov.
- Students are often addressed by a nickname. Ask the individual or the parents which name is preferred.
- When sending written materials to families, address them as follows:
  – To the parents of Katerina Vadimovna Pugachova
  – To the Pugachov family

For example

A father introduces himself as Andrey Ivanovich Medvedev, the mother introduces herself as Valentina Vladimirovna Medvedeva, and their children are Vladimir Andreyevich Medvedev and Anna Andreyevna Medvedeva.

Registering students

1. Include all names in databases and documents.
2. If the first name is hyphenated and the input field is limited, only enter the name before the hyphen.
3. Place patronymics in the middle name field, unless the parents indicate otherwise.

*First names are in semibold, middle names are in italics, and last names are in heavy throughout this guide.
Family example

Father: Andrey Ivanovich Medvedev
First name: Andrey
Middle name: Ivanovich
Last name: Medvedev

Mother: Valentina Vladimirovna Medvedeva
First name: Valentina
Middle name: Vladimirovna
Last name: Medvedeva

Son: Vladimir Andreyevich Medvedev
First name: Vladimir
Middle name: Andreyevich
Last name: Medvedev

Daughter: Anna Andreyevna Medvedeva
First name: Anna
Middle name: Andreyevna
Last name: Medvedeva

Additional examples

Student: Valentina Vladimirovna Tereshkova
First name: Valentina
Middle name: Vladimirovna
Last name: Tereshkova

Student: Maya Mikhailovna Plisetskaya
First name: Maya
Middle name: Mikhailovna
Last name: Plisetskaya

Student: Vladimir Semyonovich Vysotsky
First name: Vladimir
Middle name: Semyonovich
Last name: Vysotsky

The middle name, a patronymic, is father’s given name appended by a gender-specific suffix, typically "evich/ovich" for males & "evna/ovna" for females.

Remember

Naming practices vary among Russian speakers, and this guide provides only a general overview.

Some Russian families adopt English naming conventions. For example, some families give the masculine last name ending to their daughters, so Anna Andreyevna Medvedeva in the example above could have Medvedev as her last name.

Use a qualified translator if you are not able to communicate clearly with the parents and student.

School staff members who register students should come to an agreement with parents on a name that respects both their cultural patterns and the constraints of the database. That name should be written out and provided to the family and student in a notice written in the family’s home language, indicating that this is the name that will be used officially at school. Doing so will help students and families remember to use the modified name in school settings.
Somali
Naming Conventions Reference Guide

What you need to know*

- Somali names typically consist of three, and occasionally two, names.
- Traditionally, an individual’s middle name is the father’s first name. The last name is the paternal grandfather’s first name, which is the same as the father’s middle name.
- Women do not usually change their last name upon marrying, so married parents will have different last names.

Addressing parents, students, and families

- Address parents by their first name or by their first two names. **Sharif Mohammed Omar** may be addressed as Sharif Mohammed and **Najima Kutub Ibrahim** may be addressed as Najima Kutub.
- Physical contact between males and females is not considered appropriate in some Somali-speaking cultures unless individuals are related. Shaking hands with the opposite gender is acceptable only when a woman extends her hand first. It is best to follow this practice unless the person indicates otherwise.
- When sending written materials to families, address them as follows:
  - To the parents of Halimo Sharif
  - To Sharif Mohammed and Najima Kutub

For example

A Somali father introduces himself as **Omar Elmi Dihoud**, the mother introduces herself as **Waris Abdi Duale**, and their children are **Ali Omar Elmi** and **Roda Omar Elmi**. Address the father as Omar Elmi and the mother as Waris Abdi.

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*First names are in **semibold**, middle names are in *italics*, and last names are in **heavy** throughout this guide.*
Family example

Father: **Omar Elmi Dihoud**
- First name: Omar
- Middle name: Elmi
- Last name: Dihoud

Mother: **Waris Abdi Duale**
- First name: Waris
- Middle name: Abdi
- Last name: Duale

Son: **Ali Omar Elmi**
- First name: Ali
- Middle name: Omar
- Last name: Elmi

Daughter: **Roda Omar Elmi**
- First name: Roda
- Middle name: Omar
- Last name: Elmi

Additional example

Student: **Abdisis Yussif**
- First name: Abdisis
- Middle name: 
- Last name: Yussif

Student: **Kamar Haji Mohamed**
- First name: Kamar
- Middle name: Haji
- Last name: Mohamed

Remember

Naming practices vary among Somali speakers, and this guide provides only a general overview.

Some Somali speakers may have names that follow English naming conventions. For example, when Somali families immigrate to an English-speaking country, the woman may adopt her husband’s last name (the first name of his paternal grandfather).

There are often several ways of spelling the same name. For example, the name Mohammed may also be written as Mohamed or Muhamad.

Use a qualified translator if you are not able to communicate clearly with the parents and student.

School staff members who register students should come to an agreement with parents on a name that respects both their cultural patterns and the constraints of the database. That name should be written out and provided to the family and student in a notice written in the family’s home language, indicating that this is the name that will be used officially at school. Doing so will help students and families remember to use the modified name in school settings.
Spanish Naming Conventions Reference Guide

What you need to know*

- Spanish names conventionally consist of one or more first names, no middle names, and two last names.
- Some Spanish first names have two or more parts (Rosa María); this is one name, not a first name and middle name.
- Spanish last names usually consist of two parts (Lucero Cárdenas); this is the last name, not Cárdenas alone.
- First names and last names are sometimes combined with articles and prepositions, such as de (of) and el or la (the). These articles and prepositions should be included with the names and should not be capitalized.
- Spanish uses accents on vowels and the letter ñ.
- Children’s last names are usually a combination of the first of each of their parents’ last names.
- Women do not typically adopt their husband's last name, so married parents may have different last names.

Addressing parents, students, and families

- Address parents as “Mr.” and “Mrs.” using their first last name. José Demetrio Morales Vizcarra should be addressed as Mr. Morales, and María del Socorro Tirado González as Mrs. Tirado. It is also acceptable to refer to parents with the husband’s first last name, as in Mr. and Mrs. Morales.
- Students with composite first names are often referred to using only one of these names, so Juan Antonio may be addressed as Juan and María Luz may be called Luz. Ask the individual or the parents which name is preferred.
- When sending written materials to families, address them as follows:
  - To the parents of Jorge Raúl Fernández Rivera
  - To the Fernández Rivera family

For example

A father introduces himself as José Demetrio Morales Vizcarra, the mother introduces herself as María del Socorro Tirado González, and their daughter is Genoveva Morales Tirado.

Registering students

1. Include all names in databases and documents.
2. Place all parts of the student’s first name in the first name field of your database and all last names in the last name field. Leave the middle name field blank, unless the parents indicate otherwise.
3. Include accents and the letter ñ on names in databases and documents. If you cannot include these marks, just record the vowel and the letter n. If possible, include a note about the change.

*First names are in semibold, and last names are in heavy throughout this guide.
Family example

Father: José Demetrio Morales Vizcarra
First name: José Demetrio
Middle name: Morales Vizcarra
Last name: Morales Vizcarra

Mother: María del Socorro Tirado González
First name: María del Socorro
Middle name: Tirado González
Last name: Tirado González

Daughter: Genoveva Morales Tirado
First name: Genoveva
Middle name: Morales Tirado
Last name: Morales Tirado

The father’s first last name and the mother’s first last name can be the child’s last name.

Additional examples

Student: Martha Lorena Rodríguez Salvatierra
First name: Martha Lorena
Middle name: Rodríguez Salvatierra
Last name: Rodríguez Salvatierra

Student: Juan Carlos de la Toba Manríquez
First name: Juan Carlos
Middle name: de la Toba Manríquez
Last name: de la Toba Manríquez

Remember

Naming practices vary greatly among Spanish speakers, and this guide provides only a general overview. In addition, some Spanish-speaking students may have names that follow English naming conventions.

If the names are longer than the fields, enter only the first name in the series. In the example above, enter only Martha in the first name field and Rodríguez in the last name field.

Use a qualified translator if you are not able to communicate clearly with the parents and student.

School staff members who register students should come to an agreement with parents on a name that respects both their cultural patterns and the constraints of the database. That name should be written out and provided to the family and student in a notice written in the family’s home language, indicating that this is the name that will be used officially at school. Doing so will help students and families remember to use the modified name in school settings.
Tagalog Naming Conventions Reference Guide

What you need to know*

- Tagalog is the most common language spoken in the Philippines.
- Tagalog names typically consist of one first name and one last name, but may vary. Middle names are common but not universal. Tagalog first names can be single names or names with two or more parts, such as Maria Therese.
- Tagalog names sometimes use suffixes such as Jr., Sr., II, or III.
- Children typically take their father’s last name and may have their mother’s maiden name as a middle name. Women often adopt their husband’s last name after marriage and may hyphenate their maiden name to their husband’s last name.

Addressing parents, students, and families

- Address parents using their last name, so Gilbert Fabona Santos should be addressed as Mr. Santos and Marieta Hernandez Montilla-Santos as Mrs. Montilla-Santos. It is also acceptable to refer to parents with the husband’s last name, as in Mr. and Mrs. Santos.
- When sending written materials to families, address them as follows:
  - To the parents of Michelle Santos
  - To the Santos family

For example

A father introduces himself as Gilbert Santos, the mother introduces herself as Marieta Hernandez Montilla-Santos, and their daughter is Michelle Montilla Santos.

Registering students

1. Include all names in databases and documents. Tagalog names typically consist of one first name and one last name and may also include a middle name.
2. Include generational suffixes such as Jr. or II with names in school databases and documents. In most databases these should be placed in the first name field.

*First names are in semibold, middle names are in italics, and last names are in heavy throughout this guide.
Family example

Father: Gilbert Fabona Santos
- First name: Gilbert
- Middle name: Fabona
- Last name: Santos

Son: Gilbert Montilla Santos, Jr.
- First name: Gilbert, Jr.
- Middle name: Montilla
- Last name: Santos

Mother: Marieta Hernandez Montilla-Santos
- First name: Marieta
- Middle name: Hernandez
- Last name: Montilla-Santos

Daughter: Michelle Montilla Santos
- First name: Michelle
- Middle name: Montilla
- Last name: Santos

Additional examples

Student: Alfonso Corregidor Pioquinto, Jr
- First name: Alfonso, Jr.
- Middle name: Corregidor
- Last name: Pioquinto

Student: Shamcey Supsup
- First name: Shamcey
- Middle name: 
- Last name: Supsup

Student: Maria Cecilia Legaspi
- First name: Maria
- Middle name: Cecilia
- Last name: Legaspi

Remember

Naming practices vary among Tagalog speakers, and this guide provides only a general overview.

Use a qualified translator if you are not able to communicate clearly with the parents and student.

School staff members who register students should come to an agreement with parents on a name that respects both their cultural patterns and the constraints of the database. That name should be written out and provided to the family and student in a notice written in the family’s home language, indicating that this is the name that will be used officially at school. Doing so will help students and families remember to use the modified name in school settings.
Ukrainian
Naming Conventions Reference Guide

What you need to know*

- Ukrainian names generally consist of a first name, middle name/patronymic, and a last name.
- Ukrainian middle names are patronymic, which means they combine the father’s first name with the suffix meaning the son or daughter of. A middle name will usually end in –vych or –yovych for men, and –ivna or –yivna for women.
- Family members typically have the father’s last name.
- Women occasionally hyphenate their maiden name with their husband’s last name.

Addressing parents, students, and families

- Address parents as “Mr.” and “Mrs.” using the husband’s last name. Vasyl Semenocych Korolyov and his wife Milena Markivna Korolyov may be addressed as Mr. and Mrs. Korolyov.
- Students are often addressed by a nickname. Ask the individual or the parents which name is preferred.
- When sending written materials to families, address them as follows:
  – To the parents of Yulia Oleksandrivna Petrenko
  – To the Petrenko family

For example

A father introduces himself as Oleksandr Ivanovich Petrenko, his wife as Oksana Amvrosiivna Petrenko, and their children as Konstantyn Oleksandrovych Petrenko and Yulia Oleksandrivna Petrenko.

Registering students

1. Include all names in databases and documents.
2. Place patronymics in the middle name field, unless the parents indicate otherwise.

*First names are in semibold, middle names are in italics, and last names are in heavy throughout this guide.
Family example

Father: Oleksandr Ivanovich Petrenko
- First name: Oleksandr
- Middle name: Ivanovich
- Last name: Petrenko

Mother: Oksana Amvrosiivna Petrenko
- First name: Oksana
- Middle name: Amvrosiivna
- Last name: Petrenko

Son: Konstantyn Oleksandrovych Petrenko
- First name: Konstantyn
- Middle name: Oleksandrovych
- Last name: Petrenko

Daughter: Yulia Oleksandrivna Petrenko
- First name: Yulia
- Middle name: Oleksandrivna
- Last name: Petrenko

The middle name, a patronymic, is the father's given name appended by a gender-specific suffix, typically "vych/yovych" for males & "ivna/yivna" for females.

Additional examples

Student: Vasyl Mykhaylovych Ivanchuk
- First name: Vasyl
- Middle name: Mykhaylovych
- Last name: Ivanchuk

Student: Ivan Semenovych Nechuy-Levytsky
- First name: Ivan
- Middle name: Semenovych
- Last name: Nechuy-Levytsky

Remember

Naming practices vary among Ukrainian speakers, and this guide provides only a general overview.

Use a qualified translator if you are not able to communicate clearly with the parents and student.

School staff members who register students should come to an agreement with parents on a name that respects both their cultural patterns and the constraints of the database. That name should be written out and provided to the family and student in a notice written in the family’s home language, indicating that this is the name that will be used officially at school. Doing so will help students and families remember to use the modified name in school settings.
Urdu
Naming Conventions Reference Guide

What you need to know*

- Urdu speakers originate from Pakistan and India.
- Naming practices vary greatly among Urdu speakers depending on religion, region, and other characteristics. These naming conventions are also applicable for Muslim Punjabi speakers.
- Urdu names typically consist of one or more first names, one or more or no middle names, and one or more last names. Names are often multi-part and can be written with or without space or hyphens. For example, Atti-ur-Rehman or Atti ur Rehman is one first name and should be entered completely.
- Children typically take some part of their father’s name as their last name. However, each family member can have a different last name.
- Women typically take some part of their husband’s name as their last name after marriage. However, some retain their maiden last name.

Addressing parents, students, and families

- Parents can be addressed by their last name, so Aziz Ashraf can be addressed as Mr. Ashraf and Samina Aziz may be addressed as Mrs. Aziz.
- Physical contact between males and females is not considered appropriate in some Urdu-speaking cultures unless individuals are related. Shaking hands with the opposite gender is acceptable only when a woman extends her hand first. It is best to follow this practice unless the person indicates otherwise.
- When sending written materials to families, address them as follows:
  - To the parents of Afeefah Ashraf
  - To the Ashraf family (the student’s last name)

For example

A father introduces himself as Mehfooz-ur-Rehman Qureshi. The father may introduce himself as Mehfooz or Mehfooz-ur-Rehman. It would be appropriate to address him as Mr. Qureshi. The mother’s name is Iffat Mehfooz. She has taken the first part of her husband’s first name as her last name. She may be addressed as Mrs. Mehfooz.

Their son’s name is Atti-ur-Rehman Qureshi. He can be referred to as Atti or Atti-ur-Rehman based on the child’s preference. However, Atti-ur-Rehman is his full first name and should be entered into the first name field completely. The daughter’s name is Kamilah Mehfooz. Like the mother, she has also taken the first part of the father’s name as her last name.

*First names are in semibold, middle names are in italics, and last names are in heavy throughout this guide.

Registering students

1. Include all names in databases and documents.
2. Include last name in the last name field.
3. Work with a parent to identify first, middle, and last names. A child may have multiple first names and no middle name.
Family example

Father: Mehfooz-ur-Rehman Qureshi
- First name: Mehfooz-ur-Rehman
- Middle name: 
- Last name: Qureshi

Son: Atti-ur-Rehman Qureshi
- First name: Atti-ur-Rehman
- Middle name: 
- Last name: Qureshi

Mother: Iffat Mehfooz
- First name: Iffat
- Middle name: 
- Last name: Mehfooz

Daughter: Kamilah Mehfooz
- First name: Kamilah
- Middle name: 
- Last name: Mehfooz

Any of the father’s names can be the child’s last name.

Additional examples

Student: Muhammad Hassan Akhtar
- First name: Muhammad Hassan
- Middle name: 
- Last name: Akhtar

Student: Nauman Saleem Gulzar
- First name: Nauman
- Middle name: Saleem
- Last name: Gulzar

Student: Hina Rabbani Khar
- First name: Hina
- Middle name: Rabbani
- Last name: Khar

Remember

Naming practices vary among Urdu speakers, especially if they also speak other regional languages. This reference guide provides only a general overview for Muslim Urdu speakers.

Each family member may have a different last name, although all may be derived from some part of the father’s name. It is best to ask parents to identify which name should go in which field.

Use a qualified translator if you are not able to communicate clearly with the parents and student.

School staff members who register students should come to an agreement with parents on a name that respects both their cultural patterns and the constraints of the database. That name should be written out and provided to the family and student in a notice written in the family’s home language, indicating that this is the name that will be used officially at school. Doing so will help students and families remember to use the modified name in school settings.
Vietnamese
Naming Conventions Reference Guide

What you need to know*

- Vietnamese names consist of two to four names. They typically include a given name and a family name. Given names or family names can include several parts.
- Vietnamese names are monosyllabic. For example, Nguyễn, a common family name, is one syllable and is usually pronounced as wînn.

The order of Vietnamese names is different from English. Family names are typically spoken and written first, middle names second, and given names third. This may be reversed when speaking in English.

- Women retain their maiden name after marriage.
- Vietnamese uses accent marks.

Addressing parents, students, and families

- Address parents using their given name. For example, Nguyễn Văn Nam should be addressed as Mr. Nam, and Nguyễn Vũ Quỳnh Anh as Mrs. Anh.

- Ask the student or parents to determine which name should be used in the classroom. Students with multi-part names are often referred to using only one of these names.

- When sending written materials to families, address them as follows:
  - To the parents of Nguyễn Văn Hải
  - To the Nguyễn family

For example

A father introduces himself as Nguyễn Văn Nam. The mother is introduced as Nguyễn Vũ Quỳnh Anh. Their son is Nguyễn Văn Hải.

Registering students

1. Include all names in databases and documents.
2. Ask the parents to identify the given name, middle name, and family name. Given names should be placed in the first name field, middle names in the middle name field, and family names in the last name field.
3. Include accent marks on names in databases and documents if possible. Vietnamese has six accent marks, which change the pronunciation and meaning of the names.

*First names are in semibold, middle names are in italics, and last names are in heavy throughout this guide.
Family example

Father: Nguyễn Văn Nam
First name: Nam
Middle name: Văn
Last name: Nguyễn

Mother: Nguyễn Vũ Quỳnh Anh
First name: Anh
Middle name: Vũ Quỳnh
Last name: Nguyễn

Son: Nguyễn Văn Hải
First name: Hải
Middle name: Văn
Last name: Nguyễn

Daughter: Hồng Hạnh Nguyễn
First name: Hồng Hạnh
Middle name: 
Last name: Nguyễn

Additional examples

Student: Ngô Minh
First name: Minh
Middle name: 
Last name: Ngô

Student: Lưu Hồng Hạnh
First name: Hồng Hạnh
Middle name: 
Last name: Lưu

Student: Phô Danh
First name: Danh
Middle name: 
Last name: Phô

Remember

Naming practices vary greatly among Vietnamese speakers, and this guide provides only a general overview. Some Vietnamese speakers may follow English naming conventions.

Use a qualified translator if you are not able to communicate clearly with the parents and student.

School staff members who register students should come to an agreement with parents on a name that respects both their cultural patterns and the constraints of the database. That name should be written out and provided to the family and student in a notice written in the family’s home language, indicating that this is the name that will be used officially at school. Doing so will help students and families remember to use the modified name in school settings.
Naming Conventions Reference Cards
These cards help you to place names in correct fields in your database. Please use these along with the detailed instructions for each language. Use a qualified translator if you are not able to communicate clearly with the parents and student.

Assembly instructions

1. Print each page of cards, making one-sided copies.
2. Trim on the solid lines and separate each page into two sets.
3. Fold each set in half vertically.
4. Hole-punch through both layers where indicated by ★ and bind with a ring fastener.
Naming Conventions Reference Guide

Throughout this guide:

First names ...
- sometimes refer to “given” names
- are designated in semibold — John

Middle names ...
- are referred to as “middle” names
- are designated in italics — Queue

Last names ...
- sometimes refer to “family” names
- do not always appear last
- are designated in superbold — Smith

Languages
- Arabic
- Chinese
- Hindi
- Korean
- Russian
- Somali
- Spanish
- Tagalog
- Ukrainian
- Urdu
- Vietnamese

Example family

Liang, Hanson

Example family

Baker, Jamie

Example family

Yu, Megan

Notes
The native Chinese usage is to write or speak the family name first, followed by the given name. This may be reversed in English. In the example above, the child’s names are provided in English order.
**KOREAN**

1. Ask which name is the **family name**.
   Family name should match the father’s family name.

2. What remains is the **given name**.
   Typically no middle names, but ask parents to ensure accuracy.

3. If the student has an English name, ask the parents if it is part of the legal name. If so, ask if it should be placed before or after the Korean **given name**.

**Example family**
father: Kim Chul Sue
mother: Lee Hee-Sun
son: Minsoo Kim
daughter: Jenny Jisun Kim

**Notes**
The native Korean usage is to write or speak the family name first, followed by the given name. This may be reversed in English. In the example above, the children’s names are provided in English order.

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**CHARACTER COUNTS**

`Getting It Right: Reference Guides for Registering Students with Non-English Names`
Getting It Right: Reference Guides for Registering Students with Non-English Names

TAGALOG

Naming Conventions Reference Guide:

1. Ask which name is the last name. Family name should match the father’s family name.

2. Ask if there is a middle name. Middle name may match the first part of the mother’s hyphenated family name.

3. What remains is the first name.

Example family
father: Gilbert Fabona Santos
mother: Marieta Hernandez Montilla-Santos
son: Gilbert Santos, Jr.
daughter: Michelle Montilla Santos

Notes
Include generational suffixes such as Jr. or II with names in school databases and documents. In most databases these should be placed in the first name field.

TAGALOG

Example family
father: Gilbert Fabona Santos
mother: Marieta Hernandez Montilla-Santos
son: Gilbert Santos, Jr.
daughter: Michelle Montilla Santos

Notes
Include generational suffixes such as Jr. or II with names in school databases and documents. In most databases these should be placed in the first name field.

URDU

Example family
father: Mehfooz-ur-Rehman Qureshi
mother: Ifmat Mehfooz
son: Atti-ur-Rehman Qureshi
daughter: Kamileh Mehfooz

Notes
A child may have multiple first names and no middle name.