



SMUDGING

Background

The Division recognizes that smudging and the use of herbs and tobacco are a part of the Indigenous traditional way of life and are, therefore, permitted in Division schools, subject to proper safety measures.

Definition

Smudging is an Indigenous tradition involving the burning of sacred medicines such as sage, sweetgrass and/or cedar believed to cleanse the body, mind, and spirit. Smudge produces a distinct scent, but the smoke associated with it is minimal and lasts a very short time. When smudging takes place, staff understand the associated protocols and importance of smudging as part of the Indigenous traditional way of life.

Procedures

1. If smudging is to take place in a Division building, principals/supervisors must ensure staff understand the associated protocols and importance of smudging as part of the Indigenous traditional way of life.
2. If smudging is to take place in a Division building, it will be in a well-ventilated designated area approved by the Director of Facilities and Technology.
3. Administration and school staff will refer to Smudging Protocol Checklist when leading or organizing a smudge.

The person conducting the smudge may be a(n):

- 3.1 Elder or Knowledge Keeper;
 - 3.2 Cultural teacher or advisor;
 - 3.3 Knowledgeable staff member;
 - 3.4 Family member or guardian; and/or student.
4. The principal will:
 - 4.1 Inform staff, students, and parents of the opportunities for smudging at the beginning of the school year.
 - 4.2 Communicate location of smudging sites in the school.
 - 4.3 Ensure appropriate signage is posted at space used for smudging.



5. The teacher will communicate to parents of participating students that a smudge will occur on a particular day, time and location.
6. Smudging is always voluntary. People should never be forced or pressured to smudge. It is completely acceptable for a person to indicate that they do not want to smudge. That person may choose to stay in the room, refrain or leave the room during a smudge. Parents or Guardians may contact their child's teacher if they choose not to participate.
7. When notified of smudging:
 - 7.1 Parents/guardians/students with independent status will report and verify any sensitivity or health matters related to smudging, and the degree to which it impacts their child's participation or attendance.
 - 7.2 Staff will report and verify any sensitivity or health matters related to smudging, and the degree to which it impacts their work, to the principal.
8. Designated smudging areas must contain a fully charged fire extinguisher.
9. Staff responsible must be instructed on the use of fire extinguishers.
10. When smudging ceremonies are completed, the materials must be fully extinguished and disposed of in an appropriate manner.
 - 10.1 Smoking or warm smudging materials need to burn out on their own.
 - 10.2 Smudge remnants and matches are to be placed in a tin can and saved.
 - 10.3 Smudge remnants are never to be placed in trash receptacle.

Reference: Section 31, 32, 33, 52, 53, 68, 196, 197, 204, 222, 225 Education Act
Tobacco and Smoking Reduction Act
Smoke-free Places Act



Smudging Protocol Checklist	
Roles and Responsibilities	
<i>A Student / family / staff member has requested or has expressed interest in a smudge.</i>	
Before I conduct or facilitate a smudge	I have: ☐ Received proper teachings. ☐ Made administration aware of detailed plans, including date, time, location and participants ☐ Properly sourced materials have been obtained Colleagues who are in close proximity to the smudge location are: ☐ Fully informed of the details ☐ Invited to participate, if interest expressed
During a smudge	I have: ☐ Posted a sign on the door notifying others that a Smudge is in Progress (sample attached) ☐ Ensured the amount of medicinal plants used does not create excess smoke ☐ Followed the smudging Administrative Procedures 163-1
Follow-Up After I conducted or facilitated a smudge	I have: ☐ Ensured protocols for the ashes were honoured ☐ Addressed any issues or concerns, if any
<i>With gratitude to Greater St. Albert Catholic Schools for sharing their Indigenous smudge knowledge framework.</i>	



Smudge In Progress

Sacred Medicines are being used in this space to clear the air around us. We smudge to have good thoughts, hear good things, see good things, speak good things and to have an open caring heart that is filled with love and acceptance.

