

SMUDGING/PIPE CEREMONIES

Background

The District recognizes the cultural/spiritual needs of the Indigenous community. The District 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 District schools, subject to proper safety measures.

Definition

Smudging is an Indigenous tradition which involves the burning of medicinal herbs, sage, sweetgrass and/or cedar. Smudge produces a distinct odour, but the smoke associated with it is minimal and lasts a very short time. A smudge is burned to cleanse the body, mind, spirit or space of any bad feelings, negative thoughts, or negative energy - cleansing both physically and spiritually.

Procedures

1. If smudging is to take place in a District building, Principals/supervisors must ensure staff understand the associated protocols and importance of smudging and pipe ceremonies.
2. Staff who are responsible for or supervising the ceremony must work with the Principal to ensure all necessary safety precautions are in place.
3. When smudging ceremonies are completed the materials must be fully extinguished and disposed of in an appropriate manner.
4. Tobacco is to be used in ceremonies and only by a person authorized to do so.

Reference: Sections 6, 17, 20, 22, 26, 65, 85 School Act
Tobacco and Vapour Products Control Act
Tobacco Damages and Health Care Costs Recovery Act
Controlled Drugs and Substances Act
School Regulation 265/89
Tobacco and Vapour Products Control Regulation
Truth and Reconciliation Commission Report Calls to Action

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