

SMUDGING CEREMONIES

Background

The District is committed to ensuring that all students have an opportunity to learn about the important roles that First Nations, Metis and Inuit peoples have had in the past, present and future of Canada. Steps have been taken so that district schools are inclusive and culturally responsive by integrating Aboriginal perspectives in school planning and programming. Aboriginal perspectives include the commonly shared experience of smudging among Canada's diverse Aboriginal population.

Definition

Smudging involves the burning of one or more traditional medicines: cedar, sage, sweet grass or tobacco. Smudging is performed for a variety of reasons, and this practice allows participants to stop, slow down, become mindful and centered. The act of cleansing through smudging is considered to be part of living a good life.

The ceremonial use of cedar, sage, sweet grass or tobacco in or on school property can be used if it is performed in relation to a traditional Aboriginal cultural activity and if its use is approved by the school-based Principal.

Procedures

The following protocol must be followed for the use of traditional Smudging Ceremonies in District grounds and facilities. In order to ensure continuity of practice, the following steps must be taken:

1. The Principal must approve in advance all Smudging Ceremonies planned by staff or any outside user group;
2. When submitting a Smudging Ceremony request to the Principal, the following information is required:
 - 2.1 Logistical Information
 - 2.1.1 Substance to be smudged (e.g. cedar, sage, sweet grass or tobacco);
 - 2.1.2 The person performing the ceremony;
 - 2.1.3 The specific location of the ceremony (if indoors, list the safety precautions that will take place and the plan for dealing with ventilation and persons with allergies and/or respiratory ailments)
 - 2.1.4 The date and time of the ceremony.

2.2 Educational Information:

2.2.1 Explain the education component that is being taught; and/or

2.2.2 Describe the cultural significance of the ceremony;

2.2.3 Confirm that any individual's participation is invitational;

2.2.4 In the case of students attending school sponsored smudging ceremonies; parents are to be notified in advance and are told to contact the Principal if they have any questions or concerns. (NOTE: there is no need for signed parental consent.)

*Reference: Sections 6, 17, 20, 22, 26, 65, 85 School Act
Tobacco Damages and Health Care Costs Act
School Regulation 265/89*

SD No. 40 (New Westminster)

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Modification to this document is not permitted without prior written consent from SD No. 40 (New Westminster)