

Administrative Procedure 132 SMUDGING AND PIPE CEREMONIES IN SCHOOLS

Truth and Reconciliation 48 (ii): “Respecting Indigenous peoples’ right to self-determination in spiritual matters, including the right to practice, develop and teach their own spiritual and religious traditions, customs and ceremonies, consistent with article 12:1 of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.”

The Division recognizes the spiritual needs of Indigenous communities. The Division recognizes that smudging involves a tobacco offering and then smudging. Using sweetgrass, sage, cedar, and/or fungus is part of smudging and Indigenous traditional ways of life. Therefore, tobacco offerings and smudging are permitted in Division schools, subject to proper safety measures.

Definitions

Smudging - an Indigenous tradition that involves the burning of sage, sweetgrass, cedar, and/or fungus. Smudge produces a distinct scent, but its smoke is minimal and lasts a very short time. A smudge is burned to cleanse the body, mind, and spirit of any bad feelings, negative thoughts, or negative energy - cleansing both physically and spiritually.

Pipe Ceremony - a particular type of ceremonial smoking pipe used by a number of Indigenous cultures in their sacred ceremonies. Traditionally, they are used to open a ceremony, make a ceremonial commitment, or seal a covenant or treaty.

Procedures

1. Indigenous practices in ECACS schools respect Canada’s agreement of Treaty 6 and 7 with the Cree, Saulteaux, Nakota, Dene, Blood, Blackfoot, Peigan, Stoney and Sacree people and local cultural, spiritual, and traditional knowledge. When smudging occurs in an ECACS building, Principals/supervisors must ensure staff understand the associated protocols and the importance of smudging and pipe ceremonies as part of the Indigenous traditional way of life.
 - 1.1. A smudge is led by a person who understands what a smudge is and why it is done.
 - 1.1.1. That person may be:
 - 1.1.1.1. an elder or cultural teacher invited to the school;
 - 1.1.1.2. a knowledgeable staff member;
 - 1.1.1.3. a family member or guardian; or
 - 1.1.1.4. a student
 - 1.2. Smudging may be used to begin ceremonies, meetings or other gatherings, though it can also be performed independently.
 - 1.3. Smudging may be used to commence a new day.
 - 1.4. The smudge is lit, and the resulting smoke is regarded as a purifying agent for the mind, body, and spirit.
 - 1.5. Smudging is a sacred practice that honours culture and will be done in accordance with the protocol of the local area. It is important to educate and inform students, staff and families about smudging.

- 1.5.1. An invitation for any students, parents or staff to participate is extended with that understanding.
 - 1.5.2. Schools will embrace and encourage dialogue about smudging, pipe ceremonies or other ceremonial practices, including the similarities and differences to ceremonial practices of other cultures.
- 1.6. Smudging will occur respectfully and in a place that recognizes the needs of all students and staff in the school building. There is an acknowledgment that requiring a smudge to occur outdoors or in an out-of-way location can be a historical reminder of when Indigenous practices were illegal, forbidden, or unwelcome.
- 1.7. Smudging is a voluntary informed act.
 - 1.7.1. The entire school community will be informed in advance of smudging.
 - 1.7.2. parents will be informed in elementary schools and may exclude their child from participation
 - 1.7.3. Secondary students may choose to participate or not.
 - 1.7.4. Non-participating students will be provided alternative programming.
2. Communication about smudging will occur with students, staff, and families. They will be informed about why people smudge, what smudging is, when it will occur, and where it will take place. This will be an ongoing process.
3. The Principal will review the request for smudging to determine how to proceed.
 - 3.1. An elder or cultural teacher who has been invited may make requests to the school, a staff member, a family member or guardian, or a student.
 - 3.2. Requests will identify participants, location, and time.
 - 3.3. Requests will identify who will be leading the smudge. When it is a student, the request will identify who is supervising.
4. When smudging takes place in an ECACS building, it will be in a designated area. Any space used as a smudging area will be approved by the Principal.
 - 4.1. Any areas designated as smudging areas are to be ventilated by a window or fume hood.
 - 4.2. Designated smudging areas must contain a fully charged fire extinguisher.
 - 4.3. Staff responsible must be instructed on the use of fire extinguishers.
5. When smudging ceremonies are completed, the materials must be fully extinguished and disposed of appropriately.
 - 5.1. Smoking or warm smudging materials need to burn out independently.
 - 5.2. Smudge remnants and matches are to be placed in a tin can and saved or returned to earth where people will not be walking. (i.e. under a tree).
 - 5.3. Smudge remnants are never to be placed in a trash receptacle.
6. Tobacco is used only by a pipe carrier in pipe ceremonies.

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Reference: Section 52, 53, 197, 204, 222, 225, Education Act
Tobacco and Smoking Reduction Act
Tobacco Act (Canada)
Bill 26 An act to control and regulate cannabis
HFCRD Administrative Procedure 171
High Prairie School Division

Cross References: AP 110 Smoke, Vape and Tobacco - Free Facilities