



Smudging Practices

A smudge is led by a person who has an understanding of what a smudge is and why it is done. That person may be: an Elder or cultural teacher who has been invited into the school; a staff person who is knowledgeable about the tradition of smudging; a parent/guardian; or a student.

The medicine is placed in a smudge container which may be a shell, a ceramic or stone bowl or a copper, brass or cast iron pan. The medicine is then lit with a match. Once the medicine is lit, the smoke may be pushed forward with a feather or a fan.

When we smudge, we first cleanse our hands with the smoke as if we were washing them. We then draw the smoke over our heads, eyes, ears, mouths and bodies. These actions remind us to think good thoughts, see, hear and speak good things and show the good of who we are. The person who lit the smudge does this first.

1. When introducing the tradition of smudging, include an Elder or traditional teacher who can explain smudging, the medicines, the teachings and the practices.
2. The school will determine the location in the building where smudging will occur. This will be determined in consultation with the divisional Workplace, Health and Safety Officer. The principal will provide the appropriate signage designating the location as a smudging site. (See Exhibit IMDE-E1 – Smudging Location.)
3. Smudging may be part of a learning experience in a classroom, part of a course, during an event or a regular part of the school day. The most important thing is that when a smudge is lit, it is done with respect. Requiring a smudge to take place outdoors (if the event is not an outdoor event) or keeping its location hidden away is not respectful and is a reminder of the days when First Nations cultural traditions were outlawed.
4. Communicate with parent(s)/guardian(s), staff and students about what smudging is, why people smudge and when and where smudging will be taking place. This should be an ongoing process.
5. Ensure students who are smudging have written parental/guardian permission to do so. (See Exhibit IMDE-E2 – Smudging Participation Consent Form.)
6. Give parent(s)/guardian(s), staff and students advanced notice that a smudge will be lit on a particular day, time and place. Allow parent(s)/guardian(s) and staff to ask questions or express their concerns.
7. Continue to educate and inform parent(s)/guardian(s), staff and students. Embrace and encourage dialogue.
8. Ensure that participating in smudging is voluntary.

Cross Reference:		
Date Adopted: August 1, 2017	Date Amended:	Board Motion(s):
Procedure: IMDE	Guidelines:	Exhibit: IMDE-E1, IMDE-E2