

Administrative Procedure 209

INDIGENOUS CEREMONIAL ACTIVITIES

Background

The Superintendent recognizes the importance of demonstrating respect and understanding for the heritage, culture and traditions of the Indigenous community. 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 Northern Gateway Public Schools (subject to proper safety measures).

Smudging is an Indigenous tradition which involves the burning of sage, sweet-grass 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 ceremonially burned to represent cleansing the body, mind, and spirit.

Procedures

1. Indigenous ceremonial activities involving the use of a Smudge shall be approved by the Principal or area site administrator.
 - 1.1 Requests may be made by an Elder or Cultural teacher who has been invited to the school, a staff member, a family member, or a student. The request will include the location and time.
2. The Principal, site supervisor or designate shall ensure that the staff members involved understand the associated protocols and importance of smudging and pipe ceremonies as part of the Indigenous traditional way of life.
3. Principal must notify staff and students when smudging in the building. When notified of smudging:
 - 3.1 Parents, students, staff or visitors will report and verify any sensitivity or health matters related to smudging and the degree to which it impacts their participation or attendance to the school. Smudging during the Spring, Summer and Fall can occur outside if possible. During the Winter months there may be a designated area within the school building.
 - 3.2 An indoor Smudge may be provided in a designated area building that:
 - 3.2.1 Is well-ventilated and approved by the Director of Maintenance; and



3.2.2 Is equipped with a fully charged fire extinguisher.

4. Staff will report any sensitivity or health matters related to smudging and the degree to which it impacts their work, or students to the Principal.
5. Principals/supervisors must ensure the development, implementation and communication of appropriate accommodations.
6. If smudging is to take place in a school or Division building, principals/supervisors must ensure staff understand the associated protocols and importance of smudging and pipe ceremonies as part of the Indigenous traditional way of life.
7. When smudging ceremonies are completed, the materials shall be fully extinguished and disposed of in an appropriate manner:
 - 7.1 Smoking or warm smudging materials need to burn out on their own;
 - 7.2 Smudge remnants and matches may be placed in a tin can and saved; and
 - 7.3 Smudge remnants shall not be placed in trash receptacle.
8. Tobacco may be used in pipe ceremonies and only by a pipe carrier.
9. The Principal will ensure a [notification](#) is posted in the school that identifies locations for smudging and relevant information related to smudging.
10. The Principal will communicate any concerns or issues regarding smudging to the First Nations, Metis and Inuit Learning Services Coordinator or Assistant Superintendent.

Reference: Education Act Preamble, 33, 52, 53, 196, 197, 222, 225 Indigenous Foundations - University of British Columbia	
	Date Approved: April 1, 2021
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References shall be updated as required and do not require additional approval.