

Smudging is a purification ceremony that has its roots in the Indigenous cultures of the world. As a tradition, it has been passed down from generation to generation and many ways and variations of how it is done exist. Smudging is an Aboriginal tradition which involves the burning of sweetgrass, sage and/or cedar. Sage smudge produces a strong and distinct odour, but the smoke associated with it is minimal and lasts a very short time. Sweetgrass has a very mild aroma and produces even less smoke than sage. A smudge is burned primarily for purification and to help create a positive mindset; it helps participants centre themselves. It is taught through oral tradition that when the Great Spirit placed the four kingdoms here on Mother Earth -- mineral, plant, animal, and human, that four sacred plants entered into an agreement with us humans. These four plants agreed to sacrifice their lives so that we could have their purifying smoke to cleanse with, maintaining a balance within ourselves and each other, in exchange for our respectful treatment of them. The four plants that entered into this agreement known as the sacred medicines include: sage, sweetgrass, cedar, and tobacco. Within our schools we are presently not incorporating tobacco into our smudges.

Sweetgrass: Sweetgrass represents the North and the hair of Mother Earth. It provides clarity of the mind and purifies.

Sage: Sage represents the West. It is seen as a women's medicine, and offers strength, wisdom, and clarity of purpose.

Cedar: Cedar represents the South. It is used for purification and to attract positive energy.

Tobacco: Tobacco represents the East. Tobacco is used as an offering before you harvest anything from Mother Earth.

The Process:

The three medicines are placed in an abalone shell and lit with matches. The smoke from the dried medicines is pushed forward with an Eagle Feather. When we smudge, we first cleanse our hands with the smoke rising from the smudge bowl, as if we were washing our hands. We then draw the smoke over our hearts, our mouths, eyes, ears, and our feet.

- We cleanse our heart to open it up to compassion.
- We cleanse our mouth so that what we speak will be truthful and honest and said in a caring manner.
- We cleanse our eyes so that they will see the Truth in the world, the beauty of Mother Earth.

- We cleanse our ears so that we will clearly hear the messages of others and understand the truth.
- We cleanse our feet so that we will walk the True path of positive choices in our lives.

The smudge bowl is offered by one person within the circle in a clockwise direction. Individuals in the group may choose to pass or smudge.

Guidelines:

The following guidelines shall be adhered to whenever smudging is to occur in a school or as part of a school event. In all cases it is expected that the smudge facilitator inform the school administrator in advance of the smudge to allow for the below identified expectations to be put in place.

Location

- A room with an exterior door or a window that can be opened to the outside is expected. The use of any other location is at discretion of principal and shall be made in consultation with the Assistant Superintendent.

Medicines/Mixtures

- The medicines/mixtures shall be milder in nature; it shall not contain tobacco. We always use Sage.
- The medicines/mixtures will be of a minimal quantity (more can be added as needed). The quantity of sage should be proportionate to the number of people in the circle. More can be added if needed. This is a very culturally appropriate thing to do.

The Students/Participants

- Explicit parental permission is required for participation.
- General information shall be provided to the broader school population as determined necessary by the school principal (i.e.: if this is a newer offering at the school).
- Students will always have the option to pass and can still be a part of the circle and experiential learning.
- Students will have the option to join the sharing circle at a later juncture if the student has concerns regarding the smoke or aroma.

Strategies to mitigate smoke and aroma for indoor circles

- The room being used for the smudge will have the door closed at all times.
- The room being used for the smudge shall have the exterior door or window open to allow for ventilation.
- Fire doors in the adjacent hallways shall be closed.
- Classroom doors in nearby areas will have their doors closed.
- Upon completion of the smudge, any residual medicines/mixtures shall be placed in a tin with a lid and placed outside the school if possible.

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| Effective Date: | March 15, 2016 | Review Date: |
| Amended Date: | | |
| Board Motion(s): | 85/16 JICH – Alcohol and other Drug Use by Students | |
| Legal/Cross Reference: | JICG – Tobacco Use by Students JIH – Search JKD – Student Suspension and Expulsion; | |