

Purpose is our Compass: Beliefs and Values that Anchor Us in this Place

2024-2025

We center our work in 2024-25 through the lens of Treaty Education, as we continue to engage in and learn about Indigenous perspectives, embedding this as a “way of doing” in our classrooms, school and community. We strive to deepen our own learning, connect and create meaning with learners to significant ideas and strengthen relationships with our community while collectively carrying the work of truth and reconciliation forward through meaningful action, intent and responsible care. We commit to using our school plan as a living, breathing and evolving document as we grow together.

A relationship of MUTUAL RESPECT – We are all treaty people.

We humanize, empathize and acknowledge the diversity that exists within everyone, including culture, gender, family makeup, lifestyle choices and personal interests. We strive to learn, question and reflect upon our own biases and to let go of assumptions that we hold about ourselves and others. Our actions, words, and behaviors set a powerful example.

We want our students to see themselves reflected in our school and to feel a sense of belonging. We want our students to show respect for others and also recognize that they must respect others for who they are.

We commit to:

- developing meaningful relationships and connections with students and families within the OVJ community, advocating for equality and supporting and standing by others when there are injustices
- amplifying diversity that gives us strength, inspiring progress by inviting student perspectives to the table, ensuring that those who have been silenced are heard
- continuing our work with student groups that amplify one another's voices, value their unique stories (Black Student Unions, Indigenous student groups, Asian Heritage groups) and honour Indigenous languages
- allowing student platforms for constructive exchange, where ideas can be challenged, but people are not, encouraging us to question and think critically, but always built on a foundation of respect and growth
- celebrating differences, engaging in meaningful dialogue, challenging stereotypes, reflecting on the power of our words and actions, recognizing the responsibility we each carry in how we communicate, especially during times of disagreement

A responsibility to the LAND and the WATER – The land is our teacher

Land and water statements are about acknowledging and maintaining meaningful relationships with Indigenous Peoples, while recognizing that our commitment is rooted in our caring relationship with Mother Earth. We strive to develop climate awareness, recognize the urgency and generate questions, be inquisitive and explore topics, based on student interest and relevance. Our actions set a powerful example for change and inspire hope.

We want our students to see the land as a living being and develop a deeper connection to nature and the environment. We want our students to show respect for the land, only taking what they need and be reminded of their responsibility to the land and to future generations.

We commit to:

- looking at examples of land acknowledgements from our school division, the wider city, from beyond Winnipeg and across Turtle Island and commit to developing a new, meaningful land acknowledgment for our school community
- inviting staff, students and classrooms to write their own land and/or water acknowledgements as part of their treaty story
- caring for the land, learning from and about the land, seeing the importance of the Indigenous plants on our school grounds and becoming care takers of these medicines, trees, plants and soil life
- growing and harvesting plants with our students, learning about them and documenting our growing knowledge
- learning from our Elders, honouring their knowledge and transforming these teachings into action – what can we do that can ensure that the land is protected?

A spirit of RECIPROCITY – We receive a gift and give a gift in return

“Gratitude creates a sense of abundance, the knowing that you have what you need. In that climate of sufficiency, our hunger for more abates and we take only what we need, in respect for the generosity of the giver. If our first response is gratitude, then our second is reciprocity: to give a gift in return.” (The Serviceberry – Robin Wall Kimmerer, 2024)

We want our students to think about the gifts they can give away, share or participate in, thinking about their relationships with others as “we”, rather than “I”. If students acknowledge that everything we consume is a gift from Mother Earth and receive it with gratitude, then the hope is that they can better take care of what they are given.

We commit to:

- working with students so they gain the knowledge, skills and values to reduce our consumption
- taking action and looking towards planetary regeneration, giving back to our land
- growing good citizens, giving to others who have less and helping those who need the most
- weaving a web of reciprocity in every classroom, of giving and taking, within your pod and throughout the school
- practicing reciprocity so that non-Indigenous people can build stronger relationships with Indigenous peoples and communities

MAANAJI'IDIWIN

How do we establish and strengthen relationships with Indigenous Peoples' language, culture, stories and traditions that are interconnected with the land, water, animals and plants?