

SMUDGING

Seven Oaks School Division is working to help First Nation, Métis and Inuit students succeed in all areas and to ensure that all students have an opportunity to learn about the important role First Nation, Métis and Inuit peoples have in the past, present and future of Canada. To ensure that schools are inclusive and culturally responsive First Nation, Métis and Inuit perspectives are integrated into the curriculum and the school community.

Seven Oaks School Division is working to share this perspective with staff, students and community to foster an atmosphere of respect, understanding and inclusivity. The Division offers learning experiences about First Nation, Métis and Inuit cultures. By doing this we honour and show appreciation for First Nation, Métis and Inuit traditions. One of the most commonly shared experiences is the First Nation tradition of smudging. Division staff will follow the Smudging Protocol and Guidelines developed for school divisions by Manitoba Education and Advanced Learning 2014.

Smudging is a tradition, common to many First Nation people, which involves the burning of one or more medicines gathered from the earth. The most common medicines used in a smudge are sweetgrass, sage and cedar, however, in Seven Oaks School Division only sage will be used as recommended in the Protocol document.

The Division recognizes that smudging is always voluntary. People are never forced or pressured to smudge. It is completely acceptable for a person to indicate that he/she does not want to smudge and that a person may choose to leave the room during a smudge. Respect for all is the guiding principle in any Aboriginal tradition.

Smudging allows people to stop, slow down, become mindful and centred. This allows people to remember, connect and be grounded in the event, task or purpose at hand. Schools may make the tradition of smudging a part of their practice in particular events or as part of the school day.

When engaging in the practice of smudging schools will be mindful of those with an allergy or sensitivity to smoke and will follow the Smudging Protocol and Guidelines for Schools.