

AP 163.1 Appendix - Indigenous Ceremonies

Background

The Division recognizes the spiritual needs of Indigenous communities. The Division recognizes that smudging involves first, a tobacco offering, and then, smudging. The use of sweetgrass, sage, cedar, and/or fungus are part of smudging and Indigenous traditional ways of life. Therefore, tobacco offerings and smudging are permitted in Division schools, subject to proper safety measures.

Definition

Smudging is an Indigenous tradition which involves the burning of sage, sweetgrass, cedar, and/or fungus. Smudge produces a distinct scent, but the smoke associated with it is minimal and lasts a very short time. A smudge is burned to cleanse the body, mind, spirit of any bad feelings, negative thoughts, or negative energy - cleansing both physically and spiritually.

Procedures

1. If smudging or a pipe ceremony is to take place in a Division building or designated site, principals/supervisors must ensure staff understand the associated protocols and importance of smudging and pipe ceremonies as part of Indigenous traditional ways of life.
2. If smudging or a pipe ceremony is to take place in a Division building, it will be in an area designated by the facility administrator.
3. Locations designated for smudging or a pipe ceremony shall be well ventilated.
4. Designated smudging areas must contain a fully charged fire extinguisher and staff responsible for overseeing a smudging or pipe ceremony must be trained in the proper use of fire extinguishers.
5. When smudging ceremonies are completed, the materials must be fully extinguished and disposed of in an appropriate manner in accordance with the following:
 - 5.1. Smoking or warm smudging materials need to burn out on their own.
 - 5.2. Smudge remnants and matches are to be placed in a metal can or box and saved.
 - 5.3. Smudge remnants are never to be placed in trash receptacles.
6. Pipe ceremony protocols are to be initiated and managed by a designated Indigenous leader who is an elder or who is designated by an elder.