
Smudging in Division Facilities

Background

St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic School Division (STAR) is committed to fostering initiatives that align with the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada's Calls to Action, Competency 5 of Alberta Education's Teaching, Leadership, and Superintendent Quality Standards, and the principles of reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities. In recognizing the cultural significance of smudging for many Indigenous Peoples, STAR supports the practice of smudging within its schools, provided it is conducted in accordance with the outlined procedures.

Procedures

1. When smudging takes place in a division building, the principal or designate must ensure that staff are informed about the protocol and its cultural significance.
2. The designated smudging area must adhere to all fire-safety regulations.
3. Whenever possible and appropriate, smudging should take place outdoors.
4. If smudging is conducted indoors, it must occur in a designated area that:
 - 4.1) is well-ventilated and approved by the Facilities Department; and
 - 4.2) has a fully charged fire extinguisher available
5. Smudging ceremonies must be led by an individual who is knowledgeable about the smudge and its purpose. All smudging activities must be supervised by a staff member. All smudging activities must be supervised by an experienced staff member, cultural teacher, Elder, family member or guardian, or an experienced student.
6. Upon the conclusion of a smudging ceremony, the supervisor is responsible for ensuring that all materials are properly extinguished and disposed of in a safe and respectful manner:
 - 6.1) smudge remnant materials should be allowed to naturally burn out;
 - 6.2) smudge remnants and matches should be placed in a metal container for safe storage;
 - 6.3) never dispose of smudge remnants in a regular trash bin
7. In any Division building where smudging takes place, proper signage should be posted outside the designated smudging area, as well as other key locations in the vicinity like the main entrance or office.
8. Before participating in a smudging ceremony, students must have consent for smudging in school from their parent or guardian, the form must be returned to the school prior to the ceremony if the parent or guardian does not consent.

9. Participation in smudging ceremonies is always voluntary and should be conducted with respect for both participants and those choosing not to participate.

References:

Section 16 & 197, Education Act

Section 16, Education Act

ATA, Stepping Stones, Elder Protocols, 2018

ATA, Stepping Stones, First Nations Traditional Plants and Uses, 2019

ATA, Teaching Quality Standards, 2018

ATA, Leadership Quality Standards, 2018

ATA, Superintendent Quality Standards, 2018

Section 16, Education Act

[Form: Consent for Smudging in School](#)