

POLICY: <u>CULTURAL PROTOCOL</u>		725
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APPROVAL/REVISION DATE: <u>October 15, 2018</u>	EFFECTIVE DATE: <u>October 16, 2018</u>	REVIEW DATE: <u>October 16, 2023</u>
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A: **POLICY**

1. 1.1 Thunder Bay Catholic District School Board respects and supports the First Nation, Metis & Inuit (FNMI) tradition of smudging that includes the use of four sacred medicines (sage, cedar, tobacco and sweet grass).
- 1.2 Thunder Bay Catholic recognizes and supports FNMI traditions practiced in schools by FNMI students, and staff in designated school spaces and cultural rooms.
- 1.3 Thunder Bay Catholic permits the use of the four sacred medicines in connection with Indigenous spiritual practices at cultural and educational events, meetings and relevant classroom presentations.
- 1.4 Thunder Bay Catholic recognizes the importance of hair in the Indigenous culture. Long hair has symbolic significance and will be respected by all students and staff.

B: **GUIDELINES**

2. 2.1 The four sacred medicines include sage, cedar, tobacco and sweet grass. Other medicines associated with FNMI cultural practices from various Indigenous cultures may be considered but must receive prior approval of the appropriate Superintendent. Thunder Bay Catholic supports the use of the four sacred medicines for FNMI cultural events and activities taking place in our schools including (but not limited to): one-on-one counselling sessions, opening/closing prayers, smudging, feasts, sacred circle gatherings, pipe ceremonies, pow wows, drumming and singing.
- 2.2 Schools and the Catholic Education Centre will have designated spaces, both inside and outside of the building – where smudging can take place. These spaces have been identified to ensure that ventilation and fire alarm issues will not disrupt the building occupants. See Appendix A.
- 2.3 In order to reduce the number of inquiries regarding the smell of smoke in buildings and in recognition of the health concerns of the school or Catholic Education Centre community, when a smudging is scheduled during regular operating hours, a notification email will be sent to staff and any 3rd party providers, advising of the smudge at least five (5) working days prior to the smudging.
- 2.4 When five (5) working days' notice cannot be provided, approval must be obtained from Principal/Supervisor. All staff must be notified either verbally or by email as soon as possible.

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- 2.5 Giving notice recognizes the importance of smudging as a cultural practice and recognizes that some members of the community may be sensitive and/or allergic. Individuals are encouraged to alert their supervisors so alternate arrangements can be made for vulnerable persons in the vicinity of the smudging. Responsibility for the safe and appropriate use of the sacred medicines rests with the lead participant(s) of the event.
- 2.6 Any person within the school community can request that the School Board provide one-on-one or group sessions to learn about the cultural practice of smudging at any time and the request will be followed up within fourteen (14) days.
- 2.7 Signage will be posted on the door of the room where the smudge is being held and the main office. Once the aroma of the smudge has dissipated, the sign will be removed. See Appendix B.
- 2.8 The person responsible for the smudge must know the location of the nearest fire extinguisher, be aware of nearby combustible materials, and keep embers in a heat proof container until cold to the touch before discarding.

Appendix A

SMUDGING DESIGNATED SPACES

Catholic Education Centre

The Boardroom is the preferred location for smudging at the Board Office. Other rooms may be used on a case by case basis. Please consult with the Manager of Plant Services and the Director of Education.

All Other Schools

The Gymnasium is the preferred location for all schools unless there is a designated Cultural Room. Other large rooms may be used on a case by case basis. Please consult with the Superintendent of Education and Manager of Plant Services.