



## Smudging Practices in Schools

### **Administrative Procedure 1.A.190**

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**Board Governance Policy Cross Reference:**

**Legal Reference:**

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**Date Adopted: March, 2014**

**Date Amended: January, 2016; October, 2022**

**Date Reviewed: April, 2019**

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*This procedure has been adapted from [Smudging Protocol for School Divisions \(2013\)](#), developed by the Aboriginal Directorate Smudging Committee, Manitoba Education and St. James Assiniboia School Division's smudging practices policy.*

The School District of Mystery Lake supports the efforts of First Nation, Métis and Inuit students to 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.

The District understands and acknowledges that First Nation, Métis and Inuit people are diverse in their languages and cultures. However, within this diversity, there are common characteristics that can be referred to as the Indigenous worldview or Indigenous perspective.

The School District of Mystery Lake shares this perspective with staff, students and community to foster an atmosphere of respect, understanding and inclusivity. The District 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 tradition of smudging.

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 smudges are sweetgrass, sage and cedar. Smudging has been passed down from generation to generation. There are many ways and variations on how a smudge is done. Historically, Métis and Inuit people did not smudge; however, today many Métis and Inuit people have incorporated smudging into their lives.

The District 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 Indigenous tradition.

Smudging allows people to stop, slow down, become mindful and centered. 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.