

**THE PROTESTANT SEPARATE SCHOOL BOARD
OF THE TOWN OF PENETANGUISHENE**

POLICY MANUAL

POLICY TITLE:

SECTION/CODE:

Smudging

School Operations D-24

APPROVAL DATE:

SUPERSEDES:

NUMBER OF PAGES:

REVIEW DATE:

December 2, 2024

New

1 of 3

December 2028

1.0 POLICY STATEMENT

The Protestant Separate School Board of the Town of Penetanguishene commits to working with the community it serves to foster an inclusive learning environment that promotes acceptance, mutual respect and the protection of creed and religious freedoms for all individuals. The Ontario Human Rights Code, The Canadian Human Rights Act, Canadian Constitution, Charter of Rights and Freedoms and United Nations Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples are guaranteed the right to freely practice spiritual traditions and to be treated equally and with dignity. One Indigenous Spiritual practice includes smudging ceremonies

2.0 PURPOSE

To increase awareness and sensitivity regarding the practice of smudging in schools and provide a process to accommodate smudging requests.

3.0 ADMINISTRATIVE REGULATIONS

3.1 Principles

- The Protestant Separate School Board (PSSBP) recognizes that the inclusion of Indigenous cultures and practices in schools creates an environment that supports and engages Indigenous staff, students and their families.
- Smudging is a traditional ceremony to give thanks for life. It involves the burning of one or more medicines gathered from the earth.
- There are four sacred medicines: tobacco, sage, sweetgrass and cedar.
- Smudging encourages people to become mindful and centered and allows individuals to let go of negative feelings and thoughts, and connect and be grounded in the event, task, or purpose at hand.

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3.2 Leading a Smudge

- A smudge is led by a person who has an understanding of what a smudge is and why it is done. That person may be any of the following:
 - An Indigenous Elder
 - A cultural teacher who has been invited into the school
 - A staff person who is experienced and knowledgeable about the tradition of smudging

3.3 Where will smudging occur at Burkevale?

- Smudging will take place outside on the school property
- Choosing the location outside depends on the needs of the participants and the person leading the smudge

3.4 How do we smudge?

- The commonly used medicine is sage
- Leaves from the sage plant are rolled together and placed in the centre of a natural vessel like an earthenware bowl, abalone shell or other object
- The medicine is lit and the flame goes out, smoke will begin to rise
- The smoke may be pushed forward with a feather, a fan, or hands
- Once the smudge is over, the medicine is allowed to burn out naturally
- The person leading the smudge watches until it is completely out and the medicine has turned to ash
- The ashes are often scattered under a tree or placed outside in another spot, giving it back to the earth

3.5 Student Participation

- Smudging usually takes place at the start of an event/task
- All individuals are expected to show respect to this Indigenous practice
- Students are encouraged to participate in smudging activities

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- Families may request their child not participate in smudging activities throughout the year by providing written notice to their teacher (the teacher will inform the Principal of this request)