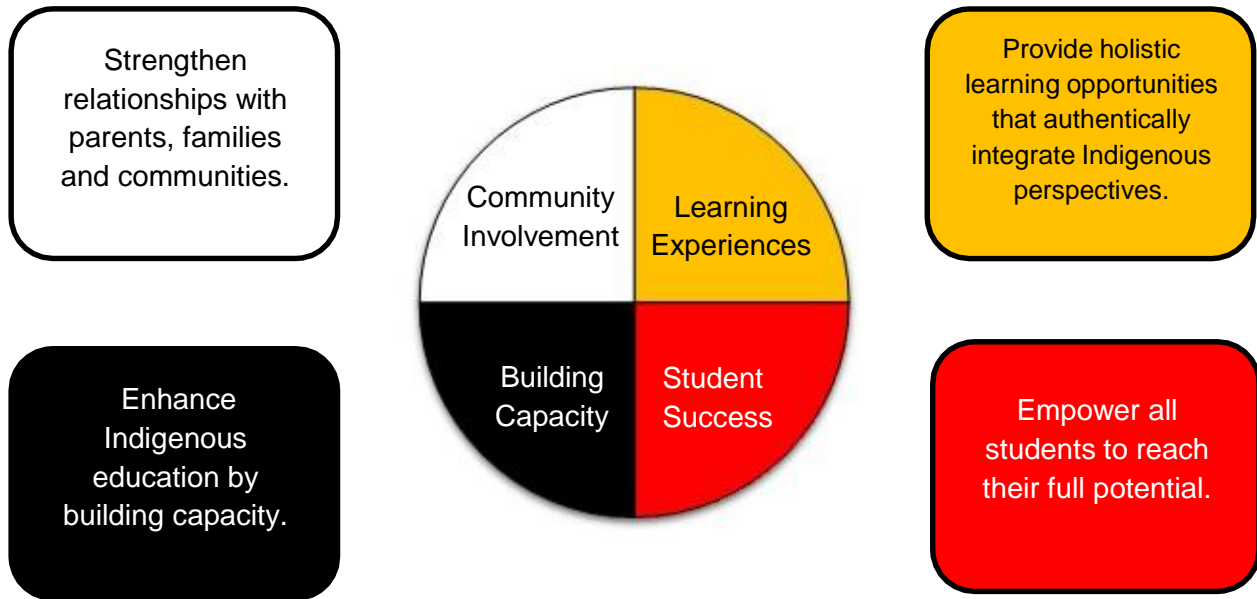




Indigenous Education Guiding Principles

This is a living, breathing document. Changes will be made as initiatives and goals change over time. The following guiding principles are meant to strengthen the Portage la Prairie School Division’s commitment to enhance Indigenous education.





1) **Learning Experiences**

- a) Recognize that Indigenous education benefits all students.
- b) Integrate Indigenous perspectives into curricula by providing opportunities for all students to develop an understanding and respect for the worldviews, histories, languages, cultures, identities, traditional knowledge and values, contemporary lifestyles, and contributions of Indigenous peoples.
- c) Strive to implement the Truth and Reconciliation Call to Action #62 to deliver age-appropriate curriculum on residential schools, Treaties, and Indigenous peoples' historical and contemporary contributions to Canada for K-12.
- d) Offer students opportunities to learn from Indigenous Elders and guest speakers, opportunities to participate in land-based education and opportunities to participate in Indigenous cultural learning experiences, while respecting the beliefs of all students.
- e) Ensure schools are safe and culturally respectful spaces that promote positive self-identity and foster a sense of belonging and purpose amongst all students.

2) **Student Success**

- a) Recognize that student success is holistic, encompassing the academic as well as mental, physical, emotional, and spiritual well-being of each student.
- b) Recognize every student is an individual and has a story.
- c) Create an environment of inclusion by providing all students with opportunities for success.
- d) Work to improve the literacy and numeracy achievement of all students.
- e) Work to improve graduation rates of all students.
- f) Support students who transition to the Portage la Prairie School Division.
- g) Help prepare students for post-secondary education and/or employment opportunities.

3) **Community Involvement**

- a) Develop and continue to enhance connections and positive relations with parents, families, and communities.
- b) Provide opportunities for parents, guardians, families and communities to become involved with their child's education.
- c) Develop and continue to enhance partnerships with First Nations communities and outside agencies and organizations.

4) **Building Capacity**

- a) Provide staff with professional development opportunities to develop the knowledge, skills, and tools necessary to properly integrate Indigenous perspectives.
- b) Provide staff with recommended resources to enhance best practices in the integration of Indigenous perspectives.
- c) Promote Indigenous representation throughout the division.
- d) Reflect Indigenous education in division, school, and classroom planning.



Smudging Procedure

In cooperation with the Indigenous Inclusion Directorate's recommendation to permit smudging at schools, the following guidelines are provided and shall be followed whenever smudging occurs at a school or as part of a school event. In all cases, it is expected that the smudge facilitator informs the school administrator in advance to allow for the expectations identified below to be put in place and followed.

5) Permission

- d) Parent/guardian permission is required for participation in smudging. All students must return the permission form ([Appendix A](#)) to the school prior to smudging.
- e) Information about the purpose and process of smudging must be communicated with parents/guardians, staff and students ([Appendix B](#)).
- f) Parents/guardians, staff and students require advance notice, minimum of one week, that smudging will be taking place to give them time to ask questions and/or express concerns.

6) Location

- f) The school administrator, in consultation with the divisional Workplace Health and Safety Officer, will determine designated area(s) where smudging can occur.
- g) Designated area(s) must be identified as spaces where smudging occurs ([Appendix C](#)).

7) Participation

- h) When introducing smudging, it is recommended to include an Elder or cultural teacher who can explain smudging, the medicines, the teachings and the practices.
- i) Smudging may be part of a learning experience in a classroom, part of a course, during an event, and/or a regular part of the school day, supervised by a trained staff.
- j) It is recommended to use sage as the medicine/mixture. Ensure that the medicine/mixture is of minimal quantity proportionate to the number of people participating in the smudge.
- k) Upon completion of the smudge, place the residual medicine/mixture in a container. Once the container is full, place the residual medicine/mixture outside in a thoughtful manner such as at the base of a tree.
- l) Ensure that smudging does not pose a health risk to students, especially students with severe asthma and respiratory issues.
- m) Ensure that participation in smudging is always voluntary.



Portage la Prairie School Division recognizes the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's sixteen distinctive calls to action in matters of education, culture and languages, and education for reconciliation. Portage la Prairie School Division recognizes that these calls to action serve as guiding principles for the future of our students, both indigenous and non-indigenous.

In the spirit of these calls to action, Portage la Prairie School Division will implement formal and consistent actions that will acknowledge and recognize Treaty Lands and Indigenous Territories in our schools and at various public school and/or divisional events.

Acknowledgement and recognition actions will include:

- A formal treaty acknowledgment will be placed in Portage la Prairie Division buildings and divisional website.
- The Treaty Acknowledgement will be read at divisional public and/or community events and gatherings including but not limited to board meetings, public consultation meetings significant school and/or community special events, celebrations and gatherings.
- The acknowledgement should be made at any appropriate time during the opening remarks.

Portage la Prairie School Division's English and French language acknowledgement and recognition public announcements of Treaty Lands and Indigenous Territories are as follows:

The Portage la Prairie School Division acknowledges that schools in our division are located on Treaty One land, as well as the traditional territory of the Ojibway, Dakota, Cree and Anishinaabe peoples and the homeland of the Métis nation.

La Division Scolaire de Portage la Prairie dirige ses opérations sur les terres traditionnelles des peuples Ojibwés, Dakotas, Cris et Anishinaabés, et sur la patrie de la nation métisse. La Division Scolaire de Portage la Prairie respecte les traités qui ont été conclus sur ce territoire.



Appendix A

Smudging Permission Form

Date: _____

Dear Parent/Guardian:

The Portage la Prairie School Division has developed procedures and guidelines which will be followed for smudging. Participation in smudging is always voluntary and requires parent/guardian permission. Smudging is done in a designated area(s) at the school. Students must return this form, with signed consent, in order to participate in smudging at school.

If you have any questions, please contact:

Jill Fast

Indigenous Academic Achievement Facilitator

Phone (204) 857-6843 Extension 1071

jillfast@plpsd.mb.ca

Smudging Permission Form

I, _____, would like my child, _____, to:

(Parent's Name)

(Child's Name)

- Participate in smudging at school.
- Observe without participating in smudging at school.
- Not participate nor observe smudging at school.

Parent/Guardian Signature

Date



Appendix B

Smudging Information

In an effort to be more culturally inclusive, the Portage la Prairie School Division would like to offer students the opportunity to participate in smudging. The Indigenous Inclusion Directorate defines smudging as a tradition, common to many Indigenous peoples, which involves the burning of one or more medicines gathered from the earth.

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. Smudging also allows people to let go of something negative. Letting go of things that inhibit a person from being balanced and focused comes from the feeling of being calm and safe while smudging. The forms of smudging will vary from nation to nation but are considered by all to be a way of cleansing oneself. Smudging is part of “the way things are done” and is part of living a good life.

Smudging is optional. Students require parent/guardian permission to smudge. Smudging is always voluntary. People should never be forced or pressured to smudge. It is completely acceptable for a person to indicate that he/she does not want to smudge and that person may choose to stay in the [area] and refrain or leave the [area] during a smudge. Respect for all is the guiding principle in any Indigenous tradition.

In the Portage la Prairie School Division, smudging will be facilitated by persons who have been taught how to smudge and supervised by staff. 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 an Elder or cultural teacher who has been invited into the school; it can be a staff member who is knowledgeable about the tradition of smudging; it can be a parent/guardian; and/or it can be a student. We also encourage schools to smudge with sage. Sage is recommended because all people can smudge with sage during anytime of the month.

This information has been adapted from *Smudging Protocol and Guidelines* (2014) developed by the Indigenous Inclusion Directorate, Manitoba Education and Advanced Learning.

http://www.edu.gov.mb.ca/aed/publications/pdf/smudging_guidelines.pdf

If you have any questions, please contact:

Jill Fast

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Phone (204) 857-6843 Extension 1071
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Appendix C

Smudging Location

THIS SPACE WILL BE USED AS A SMUDGING LOCATION

Smudging is an Indigenous tradition which involves the burning of sweet grass, sage and/or cedar. Sage smudge produces a distinct aroma but the smoke associated with it is minimal and lasts a very short time. In the Portage la Prairie School Division it is recommended that sage be used for smudging.

A smudge is burned primarily for purification and to help to create a positive mind set. Under the Province of Manitoba's "*The Non-Smokers Health Protection Act*" smudging is permitted. The Portage la Prairie School Division has recognized that smudging is a part of traditional Indigenous way of life and is therefore permitted in the division.

For more information, contact:

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