



Gordon Denny Community School

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April 14, 2021

Dear Parents and Guardians:

In the spirit of reconciliation, our Cree language and culture classes have been learning about the four sacred medicines and their uses in smudging. In the coming weeks, students will be invited to observe or partake in a sage smudge. Many Indigenous cultural teachings are only offered and never a requirement; people are encouraged to take or leave what they choose. As such, smudging is regarded as purely voluntary (read below for more information).

Smudging

- Students can observe or participate. If you would like to excuse your child from smudging, please contact the office.
- Many of our staff and students identify as Indigenous and some regularly practice Indigenous traditions like smudging.
- Smudging is not only a Cree tradition but is part of the traditions many cultures worldwide. Although traditionally smudging is a ceremony, our Cree programming will not be observing the tradition in a religious context but as a cultural practice.
- Our smudge will be before class in the gymnasium, keeping those with sensitivities, in mind.
- Sage will be the sacred medicine we will be using for our smudging experiences.

Smudging allows people to stop, slow down, become mindful and centered; providing a way to remember, connect and be grounded in the event, task or purpose at hand. Smudging varies from nation to nation but is generally viewed as a way of cleansing oneself and is considered a way to let go of negativity. The feeling of being calm and safe while smudging can support a sense balance and focus. Smudging can be seen in connection with our school division's philosophy, "living the good life, Mitho-pimatisowin."

We smudge: our hands so we might create beautiful things, our eyes so we see the signs and wonders of the world, our mouth/throat that we speak rightly when words are needed, our ears so we hear kindness and our hearts, so we hear its message clearly.

If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Sincerely,


Scott Hepworth
Principal

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