

(COPY TO SCHOOL LETTERHEAD)

Dear Parent(s)/Guardian(s),

The Renfrew County District School Board (RCDSB) supports efforts to include Indigenous Ways of Knowing, Learning, and Being. As a District, we honour and show appreciation for Indigenous cultural practices and ceremonies. This fosters an atmosphere of reciprocity, respect, understanding, inclusivity, and upholds the Ontario Human Rights Code and our commitment to the Calls to Action from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada and upheld by The Supreme Court of Canada. Learning about Indigenous cultures is a part of the Ontario curriculum.

Smudging is one of the most commonly shared practices among First Nations and Métis people. Group smudging is often a part of opening ceremonies, gatherings, and cultural celebrations. Occasionally, there may be experiential opportunities where students are invited to participate in a smudge (e.g., class presentation with a guest) throughout the school year.

Smudging is a traditional ceremony practiced by First Nations and Métis Peoples. Forms of smudging can be different from place-to-place, but are commonly considered a way of cleansing. Smudging can encourage people to become mindful and centered, to let go of negative emotions and thoughts, and to be connected to the event, task, or purpose at hand.

Smudging involves the burning of one or more medicines gathered from the Earth. There are four sacred medicines: ceremonial tobacco, sage, sweetgrass and cedar. Smudging has been passed down from generation to generation. There are many ways to perform a smudge and different variations exist. Smudging is one of the traditional practices that honours the lands and waters of this territory and all life within it.

Students always have the option to not participate in a group smudging. **If parents/guardians prefer that their child(ren) not participate in group smudging opportunities throughout the school year, a written request must be submitted to the school.**

For further information, please see the RCDSB's [Administrative Procedure for Smudging in Schools](#) and the [Renfrew County District School Board Smudging in Schools Guidelines](#).