



Independent School District 152



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American Indian Smudging

Administrative Procedure: 625.1

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Section: 600 Education Programs

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AMERICAN INDIAN SMUDGING

Moorhead Area Public Schools recognizes the unique cultural, language, and educational needs of American Indian students enrolled in the Moorhead Area Public Schools and is committed to creating a welcoming and safe environment which views cultural differences as an asset for all to learn and benefit from. In this manner, the Moorhead Area Public Schools, as a culturally responsive leader in the ongoing work of Equity, will permit the American Indian cultural practice of Smudging within all School District facilities, on School District grounds, and at School District activities.

DEFINITIONS

1. “Smudging” Process/protocol: An aspect of traditional American Indian culture/lifeway involves a traditional practice of smudging for emotional, and/or physical, mental, and/or spiritual well-being. Smudging might include an individual (student with staff only), a small or large group. The process for smudging is burning a traditional medicine of sage, cedar, tobacco, or sweetgrass in a “smudging shell or like vessel.”
2. “Sacred Objects” Some American Indian cultural practices include sacred objects. Eagle feathers, smudging shells, traditional medicines, tobacco ties, traditional pipes, beaded articles, and leather pouches are considered sacred objects to many American Indian people. These sacred objects should not be moved or touched without the permission of the student, staff, or MAPS Indian Education staff.
3. “Sacred medicines for smudging” Sacred medicines such as sweetgrass, sage, cedar, and tobacco may be burned by the student with the counselor or other Indian education staff in very small quantities, in an abalone shell (preferred) or other fire-safe container. The counseling department and American Indian education liaisons will keep a shell that can be used. While these practices are being performed, they should not be interrupted unless the practice endangers others. The resolution of any problems in regard to these practices should be carried out with respect and consideration of the student’s rights and MAPS’s rules and regulations and with the involvement of the MAPS American Indian education department.

4. "Smudging Process" includes the use of a lighter or matches to be done by a trained staff member or community member to light the smudge medicines. Adults may light a smudge at any event on MAPS property or events.

GENERAL PROCEDURE AND GUIDELINES

1. Smudging is an American Indian culture/lifeway practice that involves the burning of traditional medicines for physical, mental, and/or spiritual well-being.

2. Smudging should be considered as voluntary.

3. Smudging should be made available to students in a timely-responsive manner.

4. Smudging should be viewed as a Social/Emotional intervention, and it is encouraged that school sites should house smudging items in the school counseling department offices and the American Indian education department.

5. Smudging training/professional development will be provided by the MAPS Indian education program for the school counseling department as a requirement for receiving and maintaining a smudging kit. Training/presentations to the entire site and/or administration will also be available upon request to the MAPS American Indian education program.

6. Building Administrators should be made aware and consulted with to determine smudging areas within the school site. The intention is to include the support of building administration for smudging, not restrictive of the cultural practice itself.

7. Smudging with students will be utilized privately or with a group in a setting with a School Counselor or Indian Education staff present or at an American Indian community event, such as a powwow or cultural presentation.

8. The intention of this procedure is to accept smudging anywhere in a school building as needed and not merely designated to one identified area within a district building.

9. Smudging is not limited to American Indian use exclusively; instead, the use of Smudging is encouraged among everyone with the guidance of an American Indian adult or MAPS Indian education program staff. Smudging can be an experience in which participants learn about other cultures and increase tolerance of cultural differences, as long as smudging is conducted in a manner respectful of American Indian culture.

10. Please note that there is no evidence that the use of Smudging affects air quality in a negative manner; instead, research demonstrates that Smudging actually serves to clear the air of negative ions. Additionally, there is no evidence that the use of Smudging poses a personal health risk or acts as an asthmatic trigger.

11. In addition to the required training the counseling team must have, an educational component should be included at each district site for building personnel to gain knowledge and

understanding about what smudging is and why smudging is important for their respective sites. This educational component can include posters, inservice, explanation of items utilized, explanation of the benefits of smudging, and notification to parents. These resource materials will be provided by the MAPS Indian education program upon request.

Questions regarding the cultural practice of Smudging should be directed toward the Moorhead Area Public Schools Indian Education Program.

Non-compliance with this procedure will result in a review of practice and procedure with an opportunity to redesign site-based protocols for safe and effective delivery of smudging. Continued non-compliance may result in disciplinary action.

United Nations, Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples

Article 12 1. Indigenous peoples have the right to manifest, practice, develop, and teach their spiritual and religious traditions, customs, and ceremonies; the right to maintain, protect, and have access in privacy to their religious and cultural sites; the right to the use and control of their ceremonial objects; and the right to the repatriation of their human remains.

American Indian Freedom of Religion Act

The American Indian Religious Freedom Act of 1978 (AIRFA) (42 U.S.C. § 1996.) protects the rights of Native Americans to exercise their traditional religions by ensuring access to sites, use, and possession of sacred objects, and the freedom to worship through ceremonials and traditional rites. AIRFA is primarily a policy statement.