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632 - SMUDGING POLICY

I. PURPOSE

Detroit Lakes Public Schools is committed to diversity, inclusion, and creating an open and respectful campus climate for all. The district recognizes tobacco, sage, sweet grass, and cedar as traditional American Indian medicines and essential elements of purification and sacred ceremony.

II. GENERAL STATEMENT OF POLICY

In compliance with Minnesota State Statute 144.4167 and 144.4165 and the American Indian Religious Freedom Act, Detroit Lakes Public Schools recognizes that smudging is essential to traditional Indigenous medicines and essential elements of purification and sacred ceremony. This policy serves to provide protocols for smudging with the school facilities while respecting all staff, students, and visitors on campus.

III. DEFINITIONS

A. Smudging is a ceremonial act of burning tobacco, sage, sweet grass, or cedar.

B. Smudging is viewed as a way of cleansing a person or space.

C. Smudging is always voluntary and people are never forced or pressured to engage in the ceremony.

D. Sage is used to clean or purify the body

E. Sweet grass is used to take bad or negative feelings away.

F. Cedar is used to clean a person’s spirit

G. Tobacco is used to show respect and carry a person’s words.

IV. PROCEDURE

A. Smudging on campus will be overseen by our American Indian Education Coordinator in collaboration with school district administrators.

B. When smudging, prior approval must be obtained by building administrator and American Indian Education Coordinator.

C. Prior to smudging, staff will be notified that there will be a smudging ceremony taking place in the building with the room(s) identified.

D. The medicine is placed in a smudge container that is a shell ore ceramic, stone, copper, brass or cast iron dish or pan.

E. The medicine is lit with a match that, once lit, is properly disposed of in a container with water.

F. Once the smudging ceremony begins, the traditional procedure of pushing the smoke will take place.

G. When smudging, do not create enough smoke to fill an entire space.

H. Once completed, the used material must be handled appropriately to respect the fire hazard and fire detections systems.

I. Never leave a burning smudge unattended.

J. In the event that the fire alarm is triggered during the ceremony, attendees must evacuate the building appropriately.

Legal References

Minnesota State Statute 144.4167
Minnesota State Statute 144.4165
American Indian Religious Freedom Act