



West St. Paul School

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Yolanda Czerwonka – Principal

Jason Hayward – Vice-Principal

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Dear Parents and Guardians,

Indigenous Education is a priority for Seven Oaks School Division and West St. Paul School. We are writing to let you know that our school will be incorporating **smudging** as part of our learning environment. One of our teachers will teach students about the meaning of smudging and its significance to Indigenous culture prior to participating or observing.

A smudge is led by a person who has an understanding of tradition. It could be led by an elder, a parent/guardian, staff member, or student. Smudging is the act of cleansing the air, mind, spirit, and emotions. A commonly used medicine to smudge is sage, which we will be using. The sage is placed in a shell and is lit with a match, then a small stream of smoke emerges. When we smudge, we first cleanse our hands with the smoke as if we were washing our hands. We then draw the smoke over our head, eyes, ears, mouths, and bodies. These actions remind us to think good thoughts, see good actions, hear good sounds, speak good words, and show the good in who we are.

This practice aligns with the **Manitoba Smudging Guidelines for Schools** and supports the **Truth and Reconciliation Commission Calls to Action**, which emphasize the importance of teaching and recognizing Indigenous histories, cultures, and traditions in Canadian schools.

Smudging will occur right after morning announcements, and any students are welcome to participate or observe. When smudging takes place. Students are welcome to participate, or quietly opt out, depending on their comfort level and family preference.

If you have any questions or would like more information, please contact your child's teacher. We are committed to ensuring that all students feel safe, supported, and respected.

Any questions about smudging can be directed to me. I can be reached by e-mail at sarah.west@7oaks.org

Thank you for your continued partnership as we work to build a more inclusive learning community for all students.