

# Policy on Smudging Ceremonies

Family Centre Policy #001



## Purpose and intent

- 1 The Family Centre (FC) recognizes that time-honored indigenous traditions and ceremonies involving smudging have passed from generation to generation. In support of the cultural integrity of these traditions, the FC has designated venues for smudging associated with cultural rituals consistent with traditional ceremonies and observances. Smudging may incorporate the smoke of sage, sweet grass, cedar, and other related medicinal plants as elements of purification and sacred ceremony. FC policy welcomes traditional practices in **specific areas with prior approval** of the use and defined procedures to assure safety. Any authorized smudging under this policy must include a specification of the planned procedures and adhere to other FC procedures and policies concerning safety.
- 1.1 The objective of this policy is to uphold our commitment to provide a safe, clean, and healthy smoke-free environment for the FC community. While the FC is a smoke-free facility, we recognize the right of Aboriginal people to perform ceremonial smudging ceremonies, as recognized in the Smoke Free Ontario Act: *"Despite prohibition from smoking in an enclosed workplace or enclosed public place, an Aboriginal person has the right to use tobacco for traditional Aboriginal cultural or spiritual purposes."* (The Smoke-Free Ontario Act, May 31, 2006).
- 1.2 This policy was endorsed by the Steering Committee of The Family Centre and will be reviewed bi-annually/as needed to ensure that it remains appropriate to the needs of the community involved with the Family Centre.

## Policy

- 2 All smudging & pipe activities within the FC will be **coordinated and approved** through the FC Coordinator or the FC and Property Services Administrative Assistant.
- 2.1 We ask that those performing the ceremonies be cognizant of the FC's fire suppression system, and attempt to keep the production of smoke to a minimum. We ask that **ceremonies with a significant amount of smoke be conducted outdoors**, if possible.
- 2.2 In order to reduce the number of inquiries regarding the smell of smoke, and to address concerns of those who may have allergies or other medical concerns, notification should be posted and an email sent to building occupants **two (2) weeks** in advance with a phone number to contact, when smudging and/or pipe ceremonies are to occur.
- 2.3 **A sign shall be placed on the door** of the area being used for the smudging ceremony and will provide contact information for questions. Signs will be available through the Family Centre Reception.
- 2.4 The sign shall remain posted until the smudge/tobacco smoke has dissipated.
- 2.5 Locations that have been approved for such ceremonies shall be periodically inspected by Property Services to insure appropriate ventilation, smoke alarms, and fire extinguishers are available and in working condition.

**If you are planning a smudge or pipe ceremony at The Family Centre, please complete the following more than two (2) weeks prior to your booking:**

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Phone/Email:**

\_\_\_\_\_

**Date of Booking:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Rooms where smudging will occur:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Please describe planned ceremony:**

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

I have read and agree to comply with the above policy.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Completed form and any questions should be directed to:

FC Coordinator: 519-772-4399 ext. 1 or [coordinator@thefamilycentre.ca](mailto:coordinator@thefamilycentre.ca)

FC and Property Services Administrative Assistant: 519-772-4399 ext. 2 or  
[chrissy.robbins@facswaterloo.org](mailto:chrissy.robbins@facswaterloo.org)