

Yukon Department of Education

Use of Traditional Medicines - Guidelines for Schools

Background

Yukon First Nations (YFN) education is a priority for the Department of Education. Schools are working diligently to help YFN students succeed in all areas, and to ensure that all students have an opportunity to learn about the important role YFN peoples have in the past, present and future of Yukon.

Schools have taken steps to ensure they are inclusive and culturally responsive by integrating Yukon First Nations ways of knowing and doing into school planning and programming in partnership with the school community. This includes welcoming all students to learn about YFN traditions.

Schools are working to share YFN ways of knowing and doing with their staff, students and community to foster an atmosphere of respect, understanding and inclusivity. Many schools offer learning experiences about YFN languages and cultures. Traditional medicine is one of the most commonly shared experiences in Yukon First Nations culture.

Guidelines for Schools

1. Traditional medicines are shared by a YFN elder or knowledge keeper. The elder or knowledge keeper is someone who can share, educate and explain the medicines, the teachings and the protocols.
2. Teachers and schools are expected to communicate with or inform parents/guardians, staff and students about what traditional medicines are, why people use traditional medicines, and when and where the use of traditional medicines will take place. Schools should continue to educate and inform throughout the school year.
3. Schools and the elder or knowledge keeper determine when and where traditional medicines will be used. Traditional medicines may be part of a learning experience outside of a classroom, in a classroom, part of a course or during an event. It may be done inside or outside, depending on the guidance of the elder or knowledge keeper who is sharing and explaining the medicines.
4. When traditional medicines are used, it must be done with respect of those who choose to be involved as well as those who choose not to be involved.
5. Schools must give all affected persons advance notice that traditional medicines will be used on a particular day, time and place.
6. Schools must also ensure that students who are using traditional medicines have written permission from their parents/guardians to do so.