Elders and Knowledge Keepers in Schools

GUIDELINES

Manitoba

Elders and Knowledge Keepers in Schools

GUIDELINES

I am opening doors for you to listen, hear, and see with an open heart and open mind. That is what the Elders do—they open doors for people that want to listen. But if they don't want to listen, they only speak for a little while. We are here to tell, to open your mind, to open the doors for the way to learn the truth.

– Gordon Walker, Kinosew Sipi
(Norway House First Nation)

2023

Manitoba Education and Early Childhood Learning

Elders and Knowledge Keepers in Schools Guidelines

Includes bibliographical references.

ISBN: 978-0-7711-6512-2 (print)

ISBN: 978-0-7711-6510-8 (pdf)

Manitoba Education and Early Childhood Learning
Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada

Cover art: Photo of Mackenzie Middle School, Mountain View School Division, April 19, 2022. Used with permission of Mountain View School Division.

This resource is available on the Manitoba Education and Early Childhood Learning website at www.edu.gov.mb.ca/iid/index.html.

Disponible en français.

Available in alternate formats upon request.

Contents

Acknowledgements iv
Introduction: Spirit and Intent of These Guidelines 1
Who Is an Elder/Knowledge Keeper? 2
The Four Rs 3
- Relevance 5
  - Mamàhtawisiwin: The Wonder We Are Born With—An Indigenous Education Policy Framework and Manitoba's K to 12 Education Action Plan 6
  - Manitoba's K to 12 Education Action Plan: A Roadmap in Response to the Recommendations of the Commission on K to 12 Education 8
  - Manitoba's Commission on K to 12 Education 9
  - Wahbung: Our Tomorrows 10
  - Our Way Is a Valid Way: Professional Educator Resource 11
  - Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action 12
- Relationship 13
  - Who Is an Elder/Knowledge Keeper? 13
  - Making Connections 16
  - The Ask 17
  - Protocol 18
  - Continuum of Engagement 20
  - Formats of Engagement 21
- Respect 22
  - Co-planning 23
  - Co-teaching 24
  - Co-learning 26
  - Co-creating Culturally Safe Learning Spaces 27
  - Divisional Volunteer/Employee Policies 28
- Reciprocity 29
  - Care 29
  - Compensation 30

Conclusion 31
Glossary 32
Appendix: Examples of Applicable and Non-applicable Grant Expenses 39
Bibliography 40

Acknowledgements

Members of the Elders and Knowledge Keepers in Schools Initiative Advisory Council guide the Elders and Knowledge Keepers in Schools Initiative. The Indigenous Inclusion Directorate thanks the following people:

Grandmother Ivy Chaske Thorassie:
Sayisi Dene First Nation and Dakota, Wipazoka Wakpa (Sioux Valley Dakota Nation)

Dr. Myra Laramee:
Cree, ocêko-sîpiy (Fisher River Cree Nation)

Charlie Nelson-abun:
Anishinaabe, Bagwaa'onishkoziibing (Roseau River Anishinaabe First Nation)

Martha Peet:
Inuit, Taloyoak, Nunavut

Linda Schatkowsky (McKay/Olson):
Red River Métis, St. Laurent

Carl Stone:
Anishinaabe, Baaskaandibewi-ziibiing (Brokenhead First Nation)

Gordon Walker:
Cree, Kinosew Sipi (Norway House Cree Nation)

Dr. Mary Wilson:
International Wisdom Keeper, Mixed Nation (Irish, Maori, North American), Shaman

Introduction: Spirit and Intent of These Guidelines

We recognize that Manitoba is on Treaty 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, and 10 Territories and the ancestral lands of the Anishinaabe, Anishininewuk, Dakota Oyate, Denesuline, Ininiwak, and Nehethowuk Peoples. We acknowledge Manitoba is located on the Homeland of the Red River Métis. We acknowledge northern Manitoba includes lands that were and are the ancestral lands of the Inuit.

The Elders and Knowledge Keepers in Schools Initiative embeds learning strategies and actions, articulated as **authentic involvement** in *Mamàhtawisiwin: The Wonder We Are Born With—An Indigenous Education Policy Framework*, to collectively realize the vision for all Manitoba students to succeed, no matter where they live, their background, or their individual circumstances.

These guidelines recognize and hold up parents, families, and grandparents as the first teachers who carry and share teachings to support children to come to know where they come from, where they are going, why they are here, and who they are.

> *Children come into the world as sacred bundles with great spiritual knowledge and teachings. The Grandparents help them to articulate, and help us to learn from them. This is the responsibility of the Grandparents, Parents, Aunties, Uncles, Elders, and Knowledge Keepers. To learn what they are bringing with them, to teach them to respect, know, and respond to their gifts, and to teach them how to live on Earth. This is a beautiful responsibility that is taught in a Good Way.*
>
> – Elders and Knowledge Keepers in Schools Initiative Advisory Council

These guidelines will increase school division capacity for respectful and relational partnerships with Elders and Knowledge Keepers toward the inclusion of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit histories, cultures, traditional values, languages, contemporary lifestyles, and Traditional Knowledge systems across all learning environments. Elders and Knowledge Keepers in Schools work is informed by Talking Circles with Elders and Knowledge Keepers, evaluation findings from the Elders and Knowledge Keepers in Schools Initiative Pilot Project, and conversations with Indigenous education leads.

Who Is an Elder/Knowledge Keeper?

I was in that era where we were ashamed to say you were Métis, so we did not learn. I am doing it now.

– Linda Schatkowsky, Red River Métis, St. Laurent

For the purposes of this document, the terms *Elder/Knowledge Keeper* will be used to encompass all individuals who function in the roles described within. However, Elders often do not self-identify as an Elder, but are recognized by their community as an Elder. While some Elders do not mind being referred to as an Elder, others may prefer to be called a Knowledge Keeper, Grandmother/Grandfather, or Uncle/Auntie. For this reason, it is important to ask how they want to be acknowledged, and ensure that this language is used throughout your interactions.

Indigenous Names for Older People

Dakota	
o'tankan	head of the family
tioshpaye	leaders of the First Nation
ishida	uncle
unkan	grandfather
kunshi	grandmother
ayapah	community spokesperson

Ojibwe	
geteadisak	older person
Gichi Ayaa'a or Gete Ayaa'a	Elder
akiwenzi	male (older person)
mitimiwi	female (older person)
koopij	great-grandfather
koopije	great-grandmother
mishomis	grandfather
kookoomis	grandmother
niniishoome	uncle
nitoozis	aunt

Cree	
kita-adchesak	older people
kisinew	male (older person)
nochikweso	female (older person)

Michif	
Red River French Michif dialect	
Il vieux	the old ones
Pepayr	Grandfather
Memayr	Grandmother
Nuk	Uncle
Tawnt	Aunt
Michif Cree	
Ahneegay-kaashigakick	the ones who know
Moushoum	Grandfather
Nouhkom	Grandmother
Taant	Aunt

Inuktitut	
Innutuqark (In-nu-tu-qark)	Elder

The Four Rs

The Elders and Knowledge Keepers in Schools Initiative guidelines are grounded on the Four Rs: relevance, relationship, respect, and reciprocity. Both Dr. Verna Kirkness and Dr. Shawn Wilson discuss these embedded concepts in their research practice as fundamental toward rightful relations. Relevance, relationship, respect, and reciprocity support and strengthen our understanding of how to engage with community in what many Elders, Knowledge Keepers, Grandparents, and community members refer to as a Good Way.

> *A **Good Way** is a way to live your whole life day to day. It is respecting others, being mindful of the guidance we are given—the natural laws. These laws, as shared by the Elders involved in the Western and Northern Canadian Protocol for Collaboration in Basic Education, involve the law of taking care of yourself, the law of taking care of others, and the law of taking care of the land and water. It means walking with respect and humility. When we approach our responsibility and work in a Good Way (with gratitude), we are learning and listening. We are picking up and doing something good for ourselves, our family, and our community.*
>
> – Elders and Knowledge Keepers in Schools Initiative Advisory Council

Relevance ensures we are anchoring our work in community, and informing our work through policy directives while reflecting the urgency to respond to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action.

Relationship outlines the importance of engaging with community members through the forming and nurturing of relationships, the following of Protocols, and through good communication.

Respect supports our understandings of how to co-create culturally safe, rich learning opportunities for students, educators, school leaders, clinicians, families, and community members. Respect ensures we are aware of and avoid cultural appropriation of Indigenous knowledge. Respect affirms the rights of Elders and Knowledge Keepers as storytellers, healers, advisors, teachers of traditional teachings and languages, and leaders of traditional ceremonies and prayers. Respect protects Indigenous knowledge and perspectives from becoming tokenized or performative.

Reciprocity explains the importance of caring for Elders and Knowledge Keepers. The concept of reciprocity includes the importance of financial compensation for Elders and Knowledge Keepers when they share their gifts with our learning communities.

The self-reflective questions below developed by the First Nations, Métis & Inuit Education Association of Ontario embody the idea of approaching engagements with Elders and Knowledge Keepers with relevance, relationship, respect, and reciprocity. These guidelines will support education stakeholders as we encounter each of these questions through the Four Rs.

Source: First Nations, Métis, and Inuit Education Association of Ontario. *Before Engaging with Indigenous Knowledge Consider . . . .* https://fnmieao.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/ik_guidelines.pdf. Used with permission.

Over my years in education, I was an Indigenous woman, but I was teaching from an Eurocentric way, and I was passing on knowledge that way, and yet I had the lived experience—I was raised in a very loving and nurturing home with my parents, across the river from my Kookum and my Mushoom. So I have had a vast lived experience I can now share, and I need to do that not just for the sake of passing that on, but for the little ones coming up. It is my responsibility that I should be transferring or leaving a legacy of that knowledge, so that is what I ascribe to do. I have not finished my work yet and I love doing it. I get energy from the young people. I believe I have selected the right path that is equal to my name. Working with Seven Oaks School Division in my retirement years for the past 14 years has allowed me to freely pursue this work in a place where Indigenous education is front and centre.

– Mary Courchene, Sagkeeng First Nation

Relevance

Relevance ensures we are anchoring our work in community, informing our work through policy directives, and responding to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action. This section links these guidelines with the following:

- the findings of the Commission on K to Education
- the policies of *Mamàhtawisiwin: The Wonder We Are Born With—An Indigenous Education Policy Framework*
- the priorities articulated in *Manitoba's K to 12 Education Action Plan*
- seminal documents such *Wahbung: Our Tomorrows,* and *Our Way Is a Valid Way: Professional Educator Resource* by Western and Northern Canadian Protocol (WNCP)

A 2021 jurisdictional scan by the department revealed the need for guidance with regard to Elder and Knowledge Keeper engagement, and the development of this support document, *Elders and Knowledge Keepers in Schools Guidelines*, addresses this need.

The Elders and Knowledge Keepers in Schools Initiative Pilot Project was carried out in the winter and spring of 2022 in 33 schools within 11 school divisions. Two important findings surfaced from the pilot evaluation. The first is the need for time for advance preparations, for project delivery, and for building relationships with Elders, Knowledge Keepers, and with the Indigenous community more widely.

The second finding is that the Pilot Project relied on existing knowledge, capacity, and relationships at the school and school-division level. Pilot schools indicated a need for help identifying appropriate protocols and developing cultural safety training for staff, with the suggestion that there should be a dedicated contact person or persons at the Indigenous Inclusion Directorate with an appropriate background to assist in matters of Protocol and cultural safety.

These guidelines support these findings from the Pilot Project. The coordinator of the Elders and Knowledge Keepers in Schools Initiative, through the Indigenous Inclusion Directorate, supports divisional planning and linkages to Elders and Knowledge Keepers to support authentic engagement. They work alongside the Indigenous Inclusion consultant to support stakeholders in embedding the strategies and actions within *Mamàhtawisiwin: The Wonder We Are Born With—An Indigenous Education Policy Framework.* Additionally, the Annual Elders and Knowledge Keepers in Schools Initiative Symposium supports collective learning and shared thinking with Elders and Knowledge Keepers, education partners, and department staff.

> *We need to teach the truth in school. We need to think about the language that is being used in schools. We are working towards anti-colonialism when we reframe how we have been taught to think about ourselves through the education system.*
>
> – Carl Stone, Anishinaabe, Baaskaandibewi-ziibiing (Brokenhead First Nation)

Mamàhtawisiwin: The Wonder We Are Born With—An Indigenous Education Policy Framework and *Manitoba's K to 12 Education Action Plan*

> *When our babies come into this world, they come to tell us a story about where they came from. Most of us don't listen. We don't learn from them, from what they bring. When the young person comes to us, we teach them how to live in this world through ceremonies. That is our responsibility, the responsibility of the old people.*
>
> – Gordon Walker, Kinosew Sipi (Norway House First Nation)

> *Mamàhtawisiwin: The Wonder We Are Born With—An Indigenous Education Policy Framework* is a provincial policy directive and conceptual framework that supports the holistic achievements of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit learners by assisting Manitoba educators in incorporating Indigenous pedagogy, languages, and culture into their teaching and practices. This provincial Indigenous Education Policy Framework is intended to support educators, by helping them deepen their understanding and progress along a path of Truth and Reconciliation in their schools, adult learning centres, post-secondary institutions, [child care centres,] classrooms, and communities. It aims to empower Manitoba teachers to understand and meet the needs of Indigenous learners by embedding strategies and practices into their educational settings and classroom routines, so that they reflect Indigenous languages, cultures, and identities. Ultimately, the core goal is to enhance the educational achievement and well-being of Indigenous students, setting them up for success in school and beyond. (MEECL, *Mamàhtawisiwin* 7)

The vision outlined in *Mamàhtawisiwin* is as follows:

> A path to an Indigenous-inclusive education system is grounded in Indigenous histories, cultures, languages, traditional values and knowledge, and contemporary lifestyles. An equitable, inclusive, and diverse education system fosters a sense of belonging in all learners so that they feel they can succeed, take responsibility, find their purpose in life, and achieve The Good Life/*Mino-pimatisiwin* (Ininew)/*Mino Bimaadiziwin* (Anishinabemowin)/*honso aynai* (Dene)/*tokatakiya wichoni washte* (Dakota)/ *minopimatitheewin* (Anisininimowin)/ᐃᓐᓅᓯᖅᑲᓯᐊᕐᓂᖅ (Inuktitut)/*Miyo-pimatishiwin* (Michif). (8)

Manitoba's K to 12 Education Action Plan (8) describes The Good Life:

> The Good Life refers to living a well-balanced life where all four components of a human are being addressed—emotional, physical, mental and spiritual.
>
> "It is through the taking of responsibility for their own personal healing and growth that individuals will be able to attain *mino-pimatasiwin* (Cree)—the good life." (Hart 44)
>
> *Pimadaziwin* is to have "life in the fullest sense, life in the sense of longevity and health." (Overholt and Callicott 151)
>
> "This growth and attempt to reach the good life is not just an individual focus. It also involves the family and community." (Hart 44)

The foundations of an Indigenous-inclusive education system are articulated in the actions of the following four strategies:

Inclusive and Culturally Safe Learning Environment

Understanding World Views, Values, Identities, Traditions, and Contemporary Lifestyles

Authentic Involvement

Putting Students at the Centre

Figure: Niji Mahkwa Circle of Nations. Painting by Fred Beardy. Teaching and colours provided by Fred Beardy and Elder Myra Laramee. Used with permission. (MEECL, *Mamàhtawisiwin* 21)

Manitoba's K to 12 Education Action Plan: A Roadmap in Response to the Recommendations of the Commission on K to 12 Education

These guidelines articulate strategies and actions to realize Manitoba Education and Early Childhood Learning's vision: *All Manitoba students succeed, no matter where they live, their background or their individual circumstances*.

> This vision puts students at the centre and requires focusing all talents, efforts, and resources on improving student success. Student success will look different for every child and it always means they are prepared to reach their full potential and to live The Good Life in which they
>
> - have hope, belonging, well-being and purpose
> - have a voice

- feel safe and supported
- are prepared for their individual path beyond graduation
- have capacity to play an active role in shaping their future and be active citizens
- live in relationships with others and the natural world
- honour and respect Indigenous ways of knowing, being and doing with a commitment to and understanding of Truth and Reconciliation

(MEECL, *Manitoba's K to 12 Education Action Plan* 8)

> *We need to put Indigenous information into education from Kindergarten to Grade 12 and that involves a lot of things. Some of them are calling it land-based education. That is nothing new to us when have been doing that for thousands of years. We still have a big contribution to make to people, to the world.*
>
> – Wanbdi Wakita, Wipazoka Wakpa
> (Dakota Valley Sioux Nation)

Manitoba's Commission on K to 12 Education

The Elders and Knowledge Keepers in Schools Initiative responds to the Manitoba's Commission on K to 12 Education's imperative to close the gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous students.

The guidelines will increase school division capacity to strengthen respectful and relational partnerships with Elders and Knowledge Keepers toward the inclusion of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit histories, cultures, languages, traditional values, contemporary lifestyles, and Traditional Knowledge systems across all learning environments.

Commission recommendations addressed by the Elders and Knowledge Keepers in Schools Initiative include the following:

26. Ensure that Knowledge Keepers have an active role in building the capacity of school staffs to improve educational outcomes for Indigenous students.
27. Implement high-impact, evidence-informed practices to close the achievement gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous students, to remove barriers and maximize curriculum implementation, teaching effectiveness, family outreach, student engagement, and mentoring supports.

    . . .

29. Provide accurate information on the historical contributions of Indigenous Peoples and put in place programming, supports, and services to assist Indigenous communities and highlight their contributions and successes within public education.

(Commission on K to 12 Education 77)

How can we teach our children so they know who they are? We need to teach our children how we think and who we are so they have a good positive identity that we have had for millennia, as long as we can remember. We are trying to develop a way of knowing that tells our young children to walk and say I am inninew and say it without putting their heads down and not feel good about it. Hold their head up and know they have a beautiful way of looking at life.

– Ron Cook, Misipawistik Cree Nation

Wahbung: Our Tomorrows

I learn to say things that the old people taught me—I honour the old people by using what they said and what they wanted us to teach people. Helping with the teachings they give us, the knowledge. It is their knowledge that we use to answer the people. That is part of the seven teachings—kindness and respect [toward] all the things that help guide us.

– Charles Nelson-abun, Bagwaa'onishkoziibing, Roseau River Anishinaabe First Nation.

Written in 1971, *Wahbung: Our Tomorrows* was a collective response by the Manitoba Indian Brotherhood, today the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs, to "achieve a just and honourable and mutually satisfactory relationship between the people of Canada and the Indian people of Manitoba" (19).

The document speaks to all areas of Indigenous and government relations, including education:

> The educational process to which we are subjected today remains open to criticism. It remains inadequate. We are subjected to school programs designed for the majority urban, middle-class society. Particular needs are not being met. This arises, in part, from the fact that too often only the standard curricula and materials prepared for all schools in the province are being used. More serious is the fact that many of the teachers are of middle-class backgrounds and bring with them their values. They impose these values

upon their students. They are not sufficiently experienced or knowledgeable in cross-cultural situations and are, therefore, not alert to adapting curricula the better to meet their students' needs. (172)

The document also states, "The present system of education is to be noted for its irrelevancy to the culture and environment in which people live; by its lack of involvement by both parents and students; by its inability to achieve its purpose without a concurrent estrangement of the student from his [their] environment" (183).

The accompanying calls for parent and community involvement to co-create and co-deliver culturally relevant and responsive learning through shared responsibility are embedded within *Mamàhtawisiwin: The Wonder We Are Born With—An Indigenous Education Policy Framework*.

Further answering these calls, these guidelines will strengthen pathways toward authentic engagement with Elders and Knowledge Keepers, community members, families, and caregivers toward the embedding of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit histories, cultures, traditional values, contemporary lifestyles, languages, and Traditional Knowledge systems across all learning environments.

> *There are so many things we as Elders need to work on. We need to focus more on our people—to concentrate more on how we can help parents.*
>
> – Martha Peet, Inuit, Taloyoak, Nunavut

Our Way Is a Valid Way: Professional Educator Resource

In 2011, the *WNCP Common Tool for Assessing and Validating Teaching and Learning Resources for Cultural Appropriateness and Historical Accuracy of First Nations, Métis and Inuit Content* was developed to guide the education community. In 2013, WNCP developed *Our Way Is a Valid Way: Professional Educator Resource* to help educators deepen their understanding of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit histories, cultures, traditional values, contemporary lifestyles, languages, and Traditional Knowledge systems. *Our Way Is a Valid Way* says the following in its introduction:

> Indigenous Peoples have remained strong and resilient despite many ongoing issues and challenges. It is believed that a balance in traditional and western education is the key to positive change, and we are now beginning to see evidence of this as teachers and schools begin to work together and build collaborative partnerships with First Nations, Métis and Inuit students, parents and/or guardians, and communities. (8)

The document concludes its history of Indigenous and settler relations with the following:

> Indigenous Peoples comprise an incredibly diverse and vibrant part of Canadian history and culture. Despite many challenges and efforts to assimilate them into mainstream Canadian cultures, [Indigenous] peoples continue to remain distinct with

distinct languages and cultural practices. As teachers, we have a valuable role to play in welcoming, valuing, and incorporating First Nations, Métis and Inuit histories and cultural perspectives into our curriculum and classrooms. In doing so, we create space for [Indigenous] students to thrive within Canadian schools while enriching our own experience of reality. Success for First Nations, Métis and Inuit students and communities means being able to succeed in school without having to compromise one's values, beliefs, and cultural identity. (11)

> *We want our kids to be in a space of belonging. We have been left out for so many decades. This will give us the opportunity to share voices teaching with each other. Up to now, no one heard from us because we did not belong.*
>
> – Gordon Walker, Kinosew Sipi (Norway House First Nation)

Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action

As articulated in *Mamàhtawisiwin: The Wonder We Are Born With—An Indigenous Education Policy Framework*, Manitoba Education and Early Childhood Learning is committed to providing all Manitoba students with engaging and high-quality education that prepares them for lifelong learning and for contributing to a socially just, democratic, and sustainable society.

Opportunities to engage with Elders and Knowledge Keepers bring forward respectful and relational learning by embedding First Nations, Inuit, and Métis world views, ways of knowing, being, and doing, well-being/well-becoming across all learning environments.

Learning First Nations, Inuit, and Métis Traditional Knowledge, true histories, languages, and cultural teachings is essential towards our collective goal of Truth and Reconciliation and right relations.

The Elders and Knowledge Keepers in Schools Initiative amplifies commitments to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Call to Action 63.

> We call upon the Council of Ministers of Education, Canada, to maintain an annual commitment to Aboriginal education issues, including:
>
> i. *Developing and implementing Kindergarten to Grade Twelve curriculum and learning resources on Aboriginal peoples in Canadian history, and the history and legacy of residential schools.*
>
> ii. *Sharing information and best practices on teaching curriculum related to residential schools and Aboriginal history.*

iii. *Building student capacity for intercultural understanding, empathy, and mutual respect.*

iv. *Identifying teacher-training needs relating to the above.*

Many non-Indigenous peoples simply never have this opportunity to engage with an Elder or Knowledge Keeper. This is a crucial life learning. It is an opportunity to learn how to engage respectfully across cultures. The experience teaches students how they can learn about other cultures.

– Elders and Knowledge Keepers in Schools Initiative Pilot Participating Teacher

Relationship

If you don't understand relationships, we need the teachings to build relationships.

– Charlie Nelson-abun, Bagwaa'onishkoziibing, Roseau River Anishinaabe First Nation

As teachers, school-based support teams, school leaders, and school division/district leaders promote authentic involvement of Elders, Knowledge Keepers, parents, families, and community in schools, good relations are of the utmost importance on this path.

The first steps in forming good relations involve understanding who Elders and Knowledge Keepers are in their communities and the work they are called upon to do.

Who Is an Elder/Knowledge Keeper?

Our knowledge is more important than degrees. Our knowledge is important because it has kept us alive for thousands of years. There is a way we teach that may not look the same as in schools, but it is important.

– Grandmother Ivy Chaske Thorassie, Sayisi Dene First Nation and Dakota, Wipazoka Wakpa (Sioux Valley Dakota Nation)

First Nations, Inuit, and Métis Elders and Knowledge Keepers are highly regarded by and within their communities. Elders and Knowledge Keepers carry special gifts (knowledge and expertise) and specific skills that are unique and have been acquired through years of ceremony, helping, learning, mentorship, guidance, experience, and practice in roles such as storytellers, healers, advisors, teachers of traditional teachings and languages, and leaders of traditional ceremonies and prayers. They have earned credibility and respect through their life experiences and involvement in their community.

The term *Elder* refers to one who understands and connects to Mother Earth, spirit, and all of Creation. Elders and Knowledge Keepers carry expertise collected through lived experience and community roles such as healers, ceremony conductors, Indigenous language speakers, land-based educators, dancers, song carriers, artisans, harvesters/gatherers, water protectors, traditional medicine practitioners, community history keepers, and Traditional Knowledge practitioners (e.g., hide tanning, wild rice harvesting, gill-net fishing, maple tree tapping).

> *In Métis culture, we share songs and stories to share the knowledge. I carry a very special song. My Grandmother was pretty much the only one that I can remember as a young boy that knew all the words. Some families knew parts of the song, but my Grandmother knew it all. She gave me the words when I was 14, and my Aunties told me I need to share that song as much as possible.*
>
> – Ron Burwash, Boggy Creek, Red River Métis

Knowledge Keeper and *Knowledge Holder* are widely used terms that generally describe an individual with traditional or cultural knowledge or expertise. This may include land-based knowledge, singing, or drumming.

The terms *Grandmother*, *Grandfather*, *Auntie*, or *Uncle* are used in a literal sense but are also terms for Elders and Knowledge Holders in some communities.

Colonization has disrupted relationships.

> Prior to the arrival of Europeans, Indigenous Peoples satisfied their material and spiritual needs through the resources of their surrounding natural world. Relationality was central to the Indigenous world view. Spiritual, human, and natural systems were viewed as one. The focus was on the community and not the individual. These views were in conflict with the European world views that were individualistic and non-relational. Due to these differences, settler governments took actions and enacted legislation that were intended to assimilate Indigenous people into Euro-Western values. (MEECL, *Mamàhtawisiwin* 38)

In 1857, the *Gradual Civilization Act* was passed as a way to assimilate "Indian" people into non-Indigenous society, followed in 1876 by the *Indian Act*, which still exists and controls many aspects of First Nations Peoples' lives.

> From the imposition of governing structures, such as band councils, and control of the rights of First Nations to practise their culture and traditions, to the determination of the land base in the form of reserves, the *Indian Act* has intruded in the daily lives of First Nations. The Act also determines who can actually qualify as an "Indian" in the form of "Indian status." The *Indian Act* also had an impact on the education of children, and in 1920, under the *Indian Act*, it became mandatory for every "Indian" child to attend an Indian Residential School and illegal for them to attend any other educational institution. (*Mamàhtawisiwin* 41)

Re-establishing relationships with the Nations whose land we are on is a critical start to creating relationships and engaging with Elders, Knowledge Keepers, and community members. Knowing the true history ensures we are approaching relationships aware of the ongoing harms Indigenous students, families, and caregivers face due to systemic racism.

> *We are able to go back to our old way and grab a hold of the gifted people no matter how old they are. We can work with them in our communities.*
>
> – Dr. Mary Wilson, International Wisdom Keeper, Mixed Nation (Irish, Maori, North American), Shaman

Policies and practices of colonization and assimilation such as Indian Residential Schools resulted in language and culture losses that had a profound impact on Indigenous Peoples. In many communities, this caused a knowledge gap between generations. Efforts to reclaim and revitalize language and culture have resulted in an influx of younger generations of Indigenous leaders and Elders who speak an Indigenous language and who have acquired traditional and ceremonial knowledge. In these cases, an "Elder" may be someone much younger than grandmothers and grandfathers through their gifts and spiritual connections.

> *In the Inuit way of life, I can buy an ulu, and that is fine. But when an older woman gifts a young person an ulu, it is meaningful. When I use my mother's ulu, I think of my mother and grandmother.*
>
> – Martha Peet, Inuit, Taloyoak, Nunavut

Making Connections

> *What we do inside our learning places has to have the contributions of each member for sharing and learning circles. Each voice has potential to connect our people.*
>
> – Dr. Myra Laramee, ocêko-sîpiy (Fisher River Cree Nation)

There are many opportunities throughout the year to meet the community in your area. Local events such as Powwows, Treaty Days celebrations, feasts, National Indigenous Peoples' Day events, and commemorations are excellent ways to create and foster the relationships necessary for authentic engagement. When attending ceremonies or events in the community, ask questions about Protocols and ceremonial conduct (e.g., long skirts for women, feast Protocols, Moon Time Protocols, Pipe Ceremony Protocols). Ask if you can bring something (e.g., a food dish to share, drinking water, firewood, paper plates, recyclable utensils), and offer to help (e.g., gather garbage, distribute water, serve food, food preparation/clean up).

> *Make that relationship with the region they are working in.*
>
> – Kevin Tacan, Wipazoka Wakpa (Sioux Valley Dakota Nation)

Local friendship centres can also be an invaluable resource, as can the students and families in your school. It is important to ask for referrals from community members who may assist with identifying and making connections to an Elder. One Elder might be knowledgeable or specialized in land use planning, another in the Treaties of Manitoba. Staff in the Indigenous Inclusion Directorate can support linkages.

> *Need to have relationships with the Elders. Come and talk to them. Come and visit, and build relationships. The ones that do build relationships. Ask them to come into the classes. Part of getting the right person is having that relationship.*
>
> – Cecil Roulette, Anishinaabe, Gaa-wiikwedaawangaag (Sandy Bay First Nation)

Getting to know the families and caregivers within school communities is an important way to create relationships. Promoting parent, grandparent, and extended family involvement is articulated in *Mamàhtawisiwin* as follows: "Create opportunities in the classroom for parents, aunties, uncles, and other family members to share their knowledge and contribute to their children's learning" (24). Parents, family members, and grandparents are the first teachers and can support school staff to centre and privilege Indigenous perspectives in the classroom through authentic engagement. Relationship building with students' families and caregivers is also key to the strategic actions of *Putting Students at the Centre*; *Understanding of World Views, Values, Identities, Traditions, and Contemporary Lifestyles*; and *Promoting an Inclusive and Culturally Safe Learning Environment*.

Get to know the students you are trying to provide services for. Get to know the families and nations you have access to. You need to identify those families—we are Anishinaabeg, but there are Dakota, Cree, and Métis. They need to identify those nations and look to their families because those are the ones that are going to help them to make them feel good about who they are. Look to their student population and their families and how they can help those schools and divisions.

– Josephine Hartin, Bagwaa'onishkoziibing, Roseau River Anishinaabe First Nation

The Ask

We are all different. I cannot give Seven Teachings—I am not Aninshinaabe. I cannot share Tipi Teachings—I am not a woman. Our culture cannot just go into a lesson plan; they are not taking the time to learn about the cultures in their area. Need to look in your region. Know the heroes, leaders, and stories in the area. The teachers need to make relationships with the community.

– Kevin Tacan, Wipazoka Wakpa (Sioux Valley Dakota Nation)

It is important to note that Elders and Knowledge Keepers carry many different gifts, which translate into diverse roles within communities. Some Knowledge Keepers hold in-depth knowledge of the land, some specialize in medicines, some hold ceremonial knowledge, while others carry knowledge of the language and oral history. This is important to note that when reaching out to an Elder or Knowledge Keeper, as the Ask should be consistent with the gifts they carry.

When asking an Elder or Knowledge Keeper to share their knowledge and teachings, walking with respect involves making sure your intentions are clear and that you are specific about your request. It also means following Protocols.

Protocol

> *Every Elder has their own Protocol—it is a process to learn that. They are not the same, and we cannot assume they are the same for every Elder.*
>
> – Dawnis Kennedy, Bagwaa'onishkoziibing, Roseau River Anishinaabe First Nation, Manitoba Indigenous Cultural Education Centre

It is important to incorporate local Nation-specific Protocols by preparing an offering, such as tobacco, tea, or a gift, to offer an Elder or Knowledge Keeper when asking for their guidance and beginning the work you are going to embark on with them. When making a formal request of an Elder, it is customary to offer tobacco, tea, or a gift, depending on their Indigenous identity (First Nations, Inuit, or Métis). This offering acts as an opening, and begins the relationship in a respectful way that acknowledges and follows local Protocols.

> *My goal is to familiarize myself with Protocols and traditions of Indigenous Peoples in my area. I am wanting to listen and learn from our Elders to gain knowledge and perspective.*
>
> – Elders and Knowledge Keepers in Schools Initiative Pilot Participating Teacher

During your initial conversation, it is acceptable to ask about the potential offering (e.g., Are you comfortable with me bringing tobacco when we meet, or do you prefer another type of offering to formalize my request?). If they are comfortable with a tobacco offering, you also may want to ask about the type of tobacco. Some Elders feel strongly about the type of tobacco offered and are mindful of how the tobacco has been handled or will be used. Some Elders may take offense to being offered a single cigarette as a form of tobacco, and others may prefer to receive a tobacco tie that has been blessed, ceremonial tobacco, or a sealed pouch of packaged tobacco. In order to accommodate these preferences, ask if a tobacco bundle is acceptable, or if a sealed package of tobacco is preferred. Similar consideration may be given to bagged or loose tea when working with Métis or Inuit Elders.

Tobacco-Specific Protocol

Tobacco opens communication, whether when talking with an Elder to ask questions or request ceremony, or when praying to Creator. When we pass tobacco, we are honouring tradition. It is said that tobacco is the leader of Indigenous medicines because it comes first. Whatever your views are on tobacco, it is a sacred medicine to Traditional people.

Ceremonial tobacco and pouches of tobacco can be purchased in retail stores or through online retailers. There is a distinct process involved in making tobacco ties, including the type, colour, and size of the cloth and the tie that is used to bundle the tobacco, and the manner in which the tobacco is blessed. It is good practice to ask an Elder or a Helper for assistance when making a tobacco tie.

Upon meeting with an Elder, the item being offered is held out or placed down in front of the Elder. If you hand it directly to an Elder, you do not give them the opportunity to accept or pass on your request—it takes away their choice.

It is important to keep your request simple and respectfully straightforward, but include all that is being asked. Once the request has been made, an Elder will take the offering to signify acceptance of the request.

Continuum of Engagement

When connections are made, relationships are formed, Protocols have been followed, and the Ask has been accepted, Elders and Knowledge Keepers can support our students, teachers, parents/families/ communities, and school divisions in many ways. As articulated by the *Elders and Knowledge Keepers in Schools Planning Template*, which supports strategic actions from *Mamàhtawisiwin*, authentic involvement with Elders, Knowledge Keepers, and community holds the possibility for a continuum of supports from the school level to the school division and system level, as detailed in the graphic below:

Continuum of Elder Supports in School

In-school Supports for Students

- Provide one-to-one mentorship and small-group or whole-class traditional teachings that instill pride in students' cultural identities and foster self-esteem and confidence.
- Reconnect students to their language, culture, and traditional ways to promote healthy behaviours and flourishing mental health and well-being.

In-school Supports for Teachers

- Provide advice and guidance to teachers, schools, and divisions to enrich learning through culturally appropriate learning models.
- Support the development and delivery of teaching content where Indigenous students see themselves and their cultures reflected and respected in schools.
- Foster the inclusion of Indigenous language programs, cultural heritage, and historical contributions and successes.
- Engage Elders as curriculum planners.
- Engage Elders as deliverers of Treaty Education.

Supports for Parents, Families, and Communities

- Enhance the connection of parents, families, and caregivers to activities, events, and opportunities in schools to benefit their child/ children's educational experience.
- Assist families and communities in reconnecting with schools to be able to transfer the intergenerational strengths and resiliency that exist within traditional ways of knowing, being, and doing.

Policy Supports for Schools and Divisions

- Provide supports on ways to reduce systematic anti-Indigenous bias and racism resulting from a lack of knowledge and understanding.
- The inclusion of Elders' voices is needed in the transformation of existing curriculum, including enhancing each subject area by providing an Indigenous perspective and validation as culturally authentic and historically accurate.
- Include Elders as board members.

I want it to start with the school board. We need clear and decisive change from all people, especially regarding the 94 Calls to Action.

– Wanbdi Wakita, Wipazoka Wakpa (Sioux Valley Dakota Nation)

Our students in schools, they have a tough time because there are not Elders in the schools. Elders can help and they can help train the teachers to help them understand how to support Indigenous students.

– Cecil Roulette, Anishinaabe, Gaa-wiikwedaawangaag (Sandy Bay First Nation)

The Western and Northern Canadian Protocol document *Our Way Is a Valid Way* also recognizes that change needs to happen at a system level:

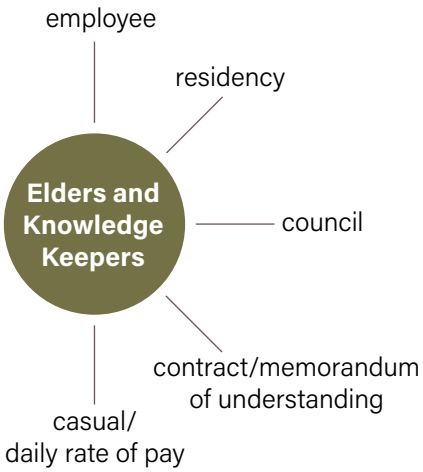
> After recognizing how schooling has failed First Nations, Métis, and Inuit students for over a century, many principals, educators, and scholars are currently looking for ways to introduce meaningful change in their relationships with Aboriginal communities and to address the needs of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit students more effectively. Part of this ongoing work is an honest look at school structures, programming, policies, curriculum, pedagogy, beliefs, and attitudes to identify any personal or systemic racism, whether it is conscious or unconscious. (93)

Formats of Engagement

Through respectful and relational conversations, Elders and Knowledge Keepers might choose from a variety of structures when engaging with school divisions.

Manitoba Education and Early Childhood Learning does not hold jurisdiction or oversight in this area and encourages local and collaborative decision making.

The following examples of formats of Elder and Knowledge Keeper engagement are informed through the jurisdictional scan of current practice across the province as learned from stakeholder engagement with Indigenous education leads:



Respect

Respect supports our understandings of how to co-create culturally safe, rich learning opportunities for students, educators, school leaders, clinicians, families, and community members. Respect ensures we are aware of and avoid cultural appropriation of Indigenous knowledge. Respect affirms the rights of Elders and Knowledge Keepers as storytellers, healers, advisors, teachers of traditional teachings and languages, and leaders of traditional ceremonies and prayers. Respect protects Indigenous knowledge and perspectives from becoming tokenized or performative.

These guidelines outline procedures and Protocols to engage with Elders and Knowledge Keepers within a respectful relationship. When we are asking community members to engage with us to share teachings, it is very important to walk alongside each other, plan together, co-teach, and ensure the experience is culturally safe for everyone involved. Elders and Knowledge Keepers are teachers and should be regarded as such. Learning from Elders and Knowledge Keepers is an optimal opportunity to de-centre and reposition ourselves as learners.

It is important to know that touching traditional items such as an Elder's bundle or the regalia of a traditional dancer or drum group without asking for permission is unacceptable. There are several teachings regarding the sacredness of ceremonial items. If you have been invited to participate in a ceremony, it is your responsibility to be knowledgeable about the Protocols. If you are unsure, ask.

Elders must be asked and must grant permission for anyone to touch the ceremonial items and to take any pictures or recordings of them. This includes audio recordings, video recordings, media streaming, and recorded notetaking. The permission should be obtained prior to Elders attending the event.

> *Teachers need to be trained on Protocols for working with Elders and caring for the sacred items they carry. Otherwise, it is difficult to create the right environment for traditional teachings.*
>
> – Elders and Knowledge Keepers in Schools Initiative Pilot Participating Elder

Co-planning

> *It's time that people know the power of the circle as a tool to help us learn what it is that our community wants and needs to learn about the true history of our people.*
>
> – Dr. Myra Laramee, ocêko-sîpiy (Fisher River Cree Nation)

One of the strategic actions of authentic engagement articulated in *Mamàhtawisiwin: The Wonder We Are Born With—An Indigenous Education Policy Framework* is "Teach alongside an Elder or Knowledge Keeper who uses Indigenous pedagogies to complement and enrich learning activities" (24). Co-planning alongside Elders and Knowledge Keepers is an essential step in this process to ensure all contributors share understandings of the purpose and goals of the engagement. Taking time to sit with Elders and Knowledge Keepers beforehand to talk about the lesson or activity creates opportunity for collective planning within respectful relationship.

> *We have a beautiful gift of not walking alone. Our children are learning they are not alone.*
>
> – Dr. Mary Wilson, International Wisdom Keeper, Mixed Nation (Irish, Maori, North American), Shaman

Co-planning may involve understanding the materials needed for the engagement, the time frame for the engagements, and how to arrange the physical space.

> *There needs to be collaboration to bring Métis perspectives. Our kids need to know the history of the people that were and are here. The opportunity needs to be there. There needs to be collaboration with Métis Knowledge Keepers to bring the learning. It is time we learned our history.*
>
> – Linda Schatakowsky, Red River Métis, St. Laurent

Co-planning within classrooms may involve preparing the students for their time with an Elder or Knowledge Keeper by reviewing good listening practices. Support students to understand the importance of an Elder's role in the community and the value of their knowledge.

Co-teaching

It is very good for a nation to know their identity, where they come from, and to know where they are going. Treat us as educators as well, instead of a person who comes in, talks for a little bit, and leaves again. That is no benefit to the student.

– Madeline Gamblin, Kinosew Sipi (Norway House)

Elders, Knowledge Keepers, and Grandparents are teachers within their communities, and they should be introduced and welcomed as such. Their teachings and the Traditional Knowledge they share support teacher and student learning. As would be common courtesy, do not interrupt an Elder/Knowledge Keeper when they are sharing teachings, and when sitting in a Sharing Circle, do not interrupt the person who is speaking, be it students or someone else sharing their perspectives.

Being in the education business, it took quite some time to know what responsibilities I have—I have been in education for almost 50 years. To me, I am now starting to understand what I should be doing is sharing the experiences I have had and the teachings I have received throughout those many years and to really share what it is when they say "using our world view." As my teaching career evolved, I began to explore who I am as an Indigenous person. As I did, I returned to my world view, my view from my preschool years before I was taken to Residential School. Before settlers came, we were here and we followed the traditions of what had been passed on. We passed on stories and the ways of life we had, our Anishinaabe ways of knowing and being. I use the word Anishinaabe *because in my language that means human beings.*

– Mary Courchene, Sagkeeng First Nation

I was absolutely awestruck by the growth that I saw by simply removing students from a traditional classroom setting and sending them to the land. I saw students smiling, laughing, working together, and interacting. For a handful of those students, I had rarely even heard them talk! I was in tears by the end of our land-based education because of the respect and teamwork that they showed.

– Elders and Knowledge Keepers in Schools Initiative Pilot Participating Teacher

The things we talked about in class using conventional teaching methods were brought alive by the Knowledge Keeper.

– Elders and Knowledge Keepers in Schools Initiative Pilot Participating Teacher

What are two things you liked about having an Elder or Knowledge Keeper in the classroom?

1. *Made me remember who I was*
2. *It reminded me of how proud our people were and that we're still here.*

– Elders and Knowledge Keepers in Schools Initiative Pilot Participating Student

Co-learning

My goals for myself would be to gain knowledge/understanding of the history and culture of Indigenous people, to be able to teach age-appropriate material in a compassionate/respectful/safe way to my students. I want my students to understand the past of Indigenous people, traditions, culture, contributions, and the resilience they have shown. I would also like to assist in bridging the gap towards reconciliation between Indigenous/non-Indigenous people.

– Elders and Knowledge Keepers in Schools Initiative Pilot Participating Teacher

Some Elders actively participate in guiding children in developing a quality of silence, keen observation skills, and a heightened sensitivity to their sacred connection to all existence. Within traditional ways of knowing, children learn the highest values of their community, including respect and the rules of appropriate conduct and behaviour within the supportive circle of their family and community. Children are encouraged and invited to actively participate in ceremonies, storytelling, and talking circles; to observe others; and to engage in introspection, experiential learning, and spiritual connection. Children also learn through mentorship as well as through participating in apprenticeships, learning games, formal instruction, tutoring, and traditional sports.

We need to learn about the human being law, the natural law, and the sacred laws. We also need to learn to use our heart, our mind, our body, and our spirit. Some of us are just living like a half of a person—think and do. No feelings, no spirit. Creator did not make us like that. They gave us a holistic, a full, person to live like that on this earth.

– Wanbdi Wakita, Wipazoka Wakpa (Sioux Valley Dakota Nation)
Dakota Valley Sioux Nation

As an example of a best practice, the First Nations Education Steering Committee (FNESC) in British Columbia articulates the *First Peoples Principles of Learning* at www.fnesc.ca/first-peoples-principles-of-learning/. Elders and Knowledge Keepers can model these principles through the ways in which they share teachings, transmit knowledge, and support holistic learning.

Can't only happen once, can't bring them in once and that is it, because us learning in our way in our own system is that the Elders and Knowledge Keepers are involved in our education and our connection to the land every day of our life. We don't just get to hear them for half an hour every three months and that is it. It has to be different.

– Dave Swanson, Kinosew Sipi (Norway House First Nation)

Co-creating Culturally Safe Learning Spaces

I think it's important to evaluate how Elder presence in the school affects our students' social, emotional, and academic well-being.

– Elders and Knowledge Keepers in Schools Initiative Pilot Participating Teacher

There has been a difficult history of relations between Indigenous Peoples and public institutions. Our kids don't thrive here; they just try to survive. Elders can play a role in bridging that relationship, in building trust.

– Elders and Knowledge Keepers in Schools Initiative Pilot Participating Elder

It is a generally accepted fact that when students feel safe and secure and experience a sense of belonging within their school community, their ability to learn and engage with others (peers, teachers, staff) is enhanced.

What are two things you liked about having an Elder or Knowledge Keeper in the classroom?

1. *I felt safe*
2. *The teachings*

– Elders and Knowledge Keepers in Schools Initiative Pilot Participating Student

Creating warm and caring schools and learning environments where First Nations, Métis, and Inuit students feel safe and valued has a positive influence on student engagement and learning.

It was clear that my students were much more receptive to the teachings coming from Indigenous Knowledge Keepers. My normally quiet and shy students felt comfortable to speak in the Sharing Circles and have asked me to invite the Knowledge Keepers back into the classroom.

– Elders and Knowledge Keepers in Schools Initiative Pilot Participating Teacher

Self-esteem is nurtured in an environment that respects and values students' unique First Nations, Métis, and Inuit cultures, languages, and world views. Valuing different world views in the classrooms helps us support student success by becoming more responsive to the diverse perspectives, ideas, humour, and experiences of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit students.

I want students to have an appreciation for Indigenous cultures, cast away stereotypes, learn how to work respectfully with Elders, Knowledge Keepers, and Traditional Teachers in the community, gain knowledge about other cultures other than their own, have knowledge about the territory and the peoples, and be proud of their own identity as Indigenous Peoples, and Canadians.

– Elders and Knowledge Keepers in Schools Initiative Pilot Participating Teacher

Divisional Volunteer/Employee Policies

Children are a sacred gift from creation, every Nation believes that. Our behaviour and actions have to show that. We need to do everything we can to protect our sacred gifts. If that means filling in a document or a form, that is fine. We should be doing everything possible and necessary to keep our children safe so they can continue on their journey, and fullifll their purpose for being. We want our children to become the full the human beings they are meant to be, and we want them to be able to fulfill their purpose.

Grandmother Ivy Chaske Thorassie, Sayisi Dene First Nation, and Dakota, Wipazoka Wakpa (Sioux Valley Dakota Nation)

Manitoba Education and Early Childhood Learning recommends that engagement with Elders, Knowledge Keepers, Grandparents, and community members follow divisional policies and procedures under child protection and safety protocols. Please refer to your divisional/organizational policies to gather and support the completion of necessary documents. It is good practice to support Elders and Knowledge Keepers through the paperwork completion process.

Reciprocity

Care

I have seen where Elders are invited into the school and they are just sort of left alone, like they are expected to know what to do. That's why here in Thompson when a teacher invites an Elder, the Elder and the teacher know what they are coming for and there is someone there to guide them, to look after them, to make sure all their needs are met. So they are not left wondering where do I go now—they always know what they are doing. That makes that place a welcoming place.

– Ron Cook, Misipawistik Cree Nation

Providing diligent and respectful support to Elders will include making sure Elders have transportation to the event, and if required, a designated parking spot (preferably close to the event entrance); greeting Elders at the entrance when they arrive; seating Elders; sitting with Elders; and making sure Elders are comfortable and their needs are met. For example, ensuring the comfort of Elders may include having a readily available supply of water to drink, pointing out the location of washrooms, providing refreshments, and establishing a quiet place for Elders to rest.

I think it is important to look after them, and don't hold back when you tell people how to treat our Elders in a good way. I always make sure someone sits with the Elders—I think that is important. Make sure they have an escort, someone to drive them, someone to help them haul stuff from their car. Kids see that—they see you doing this stuff so they know how to look after them.

– Josephine Hartin, Bagwaa'onishkoziibing, Roseau River Anishinaabe First Nation

Compensation

Honour the knowledge that people carry.

– Grandmother Ivy Chaske Thorassie, Sayisi Dene First Nation, and Dakota, Wipazoka Wakpa (Sioux Valley Dakota Nation)

Indigenous knowledge is invaluable. Elders must be acknowledged and recognized with compensation equivalent to other dignitaries such as Canadian Senators, PhD scholars, lawyers, and consultants, all of whom receive compensation for their services.

Hosts are expected to provide an honorarium to Indigenous Elders and Knowledge Keepers for sharing their knowledge or gifts in a show of reciprocity. It is also important to note that some Elders have a friend or family member who acts as a Helper, while others may be open to the organizer assigning a Helper. An honorarium should be provided for an Elder's Helper. In traditional times, Elders were given food, clothing, and other necessities in exchange for their help. It's also considered a good practice to provide an Elder with a gift for sharing their time, knowledge, and wisdom. This gift would be given in addition to an honorarium that would remunerate them for their time, travel, and efforts; however, a gift in addition to the honorarium is not obligatory.

Formal arrangements for payment of honoraria and additional costs related to transportation, food, and other special accommodations required by Elders and their Helpers must be made well in advance of the engagement. This shows a respectful standard of practice. It also allows ample time for Elders to collect the necessary documentation required for processing honorarium payments. As needed, please provide supports to Elders to complete these documentation requirements, such as an explanation of the information that is needed and where required documents (such as a void cheque or invoice) may be obtained.

Divisions may choose to develop an internal invoicing system for use when engaging with Elders/Knowledge Keepers to collect social insurance numbers, and addresses. Complete these administration requirements in advance of the engagement to ensure honoraria are ready the day of the engagement.

When providing an honorarium cheque to an Elder, the cheque should be placed in an envelope and passed to the Elder **upon arrival**. This practice aims to ensure that Elders are acknowledged in a respectful, thoughtful, and supportive manner.

For guidance and support regarding honoraria amounts and thresholds, please contact the coordinator of the Elders and Knowledge Keepers in Schools Initiative through the Indigenous Inclusion Directorate.

Conclusion

Manitoba Education and Early Childhood Learning acknowledges the collective voice of many who have contributed to these guidelines. We extend a special thank you to the Elders/Knowledge Keepers, families/caregivers, students, and teachers/school support staff who have shared their teachings, feelings, experiences, and insights to support authentic engagement.

These guidelines are a starting point to create, support, and amplify relationships by ensuring that our work is relevant, that we are working within relationship, that we are walking with respect, and that we are showing reciprocity for the gifts we are receiving.

As the conclusion of *Mamàhtawisiwin: The Wonder We Are Born With—An Indigenous Education Policy Framework* says,

> We have the moral and professional responsibility to support students' proficiency, and their ability to navigate and walk "strong like two people" (Dogrib) in both traditional and contemporary worlds. To do this, we must better understand that Indigenous ways of knowing, being, and doing revolve around the individual's responsibility to the collective—to their roles and place within the community. Indigenous students will then be more successful in school, and will be able to participate in and contribute to the economic and social benefits long denied them and their communities. All learners need to feel they belong, and that they can succeed, take responsibility, find their purpose in life and achieve The Good Life/*Mino-pimatisiwin* (Ininew)/*Mino Bimaadiziwin* (Anishinabemowin)/*honso aynai* (Dene)/*tokatakiya wichoni washte* (Dakota)/*minopimatitheewin* (Anisininimowin)/ᐃᓐᓅᓯᖃᓯᐊᕐᓂᖅ (Inuktitut)/*Miyo-pimatishiwin* (Michif). (30)

Glossary

Aboriginal Peoples

The descendants of the Indigenous or original inhabitants of a particular nation or territory. In Canada, the term is used to collectively describe three cultural groups of Aboriginal people: First Nations, Métis, and Inuit. These are three separate peoples with unique heritages, languages, cultural practices, spiritual beliefs, histories, and political goals.

The 1982 *Constitution Act*, under section 35, confers official Aboriginal status on status "Indians," "non-status Indians," Métis, and Inuit. As the Indigenous Peoples of Canada, Aboriginal Peoples argue that they have collective entitlements that were never extinguished and that they are rightfully entitled to special considerations under section 35 protections. The term *Indigenous* is now used generally and in everyday conversation as opposed to *Aboriginal*; however, the term *Aboriginal* continues to be used within a legal context and in constitutional law at both the provincial and federal level.

-abun/-ebun/-ibun

A suffix added to a person's name or family title after they have passed to the spirit world.

assimilation

A process, usually in reference to cultural minorities, of forced surrendering of distinctive characteristics and identity in order to become part of the majority group.

ceremony

A way to acknowledge life and spirit. There are many ceremonies to acknowledge the Creator's gifts. They are distinct to certain times, stages, and structures within the life journey unique to each person and their Nation. Our spirit needs ceremony to help us move through our life in harmony and balance.

ceremonial items

Sacred articles specific to each individual and their Nation. They are earned and people who hold them carry great responsibility for them. Ceremonial items have spirit. Ceremonial item are passed down and carry great significance, life, meaning, history, and purpose. It is a right, an honour, and a responsibility to carry ceremonial items. Ceremonial items help us articulate messages we are sending and receiving from all of Creation.

Ceremonial Knowledge

The words that guide spirit and energy to bring messages from the spirit world. They guide the ceremony carrier to move spirit and emotion through the people who are attending the ceremony, and who may receive healing from ceremony. Knowledge and blood memory knowledge are passed along through ceremony and guidance from the Knowledge Keepers.

colonialism

Usually refers to the period of European colonization and political domination from the 1400s onwards in the Americas, Asia, and Africa, and includes the different forms of colonialism involving settler colonies, such as Canada, and non-settler colonies, such as India during British rule. Colonialism also differs across colonizing nations and across time. For example, French colonialism had different policies from British colonialism, while modern colonialism is often seen as part of "globalization," which includes the exploitation of labour and national resources by transnational corporations and the expansion of free trade agreements and blocs.

Creator

The universal energy human kind is coming to understand. Creator carries the male and female energy necessary to understand all life in the universe.

culture

The totality of ideas, beliefs, values, knowledge, habits, and the way of life.

cultural appropriation

To appropriate is to take or borrow something. Cultural appropriation refers to the use of Indigenous cultural motifs, art and artifacts, themes, "voices," or images without appropriate context or in a way that may misrepresent the real experience of the people from whose culture it is drawn.

cultural safety

An outcome based on respectful engagement that recognizes and strives to address power imbalances inherent in the education system. It results in an environment free of racism and discrimination, where people feel safe.

First Nations

One of the three distinct cultural groups of Indigenous Peoples in Canada. This is a term that came into common usage in the 1970s to replace the word *Indian*, which many people found offensive. Although the term *First Nations* is widely used, no legal definition of it exists. Among its uses, the term *First Nations Peoples* refers to the "Indian" people in Canada, both Status and non-Status. Many have also adopted the term *First Nation* to replace the word *band* in the name of their community. There are 633 First Nations, representing 52 nations or cultural groups, and more than 50 languages. Most individuals prefer to be referred to by their specific First Nation. For example, Manitoba's First Nations include Anishinaabe (Anishinabemowin), Ininew (Cree), Anisinine (Anisininemowin), Dakota, and Denesuline (Dene).

feast

From Nation to Nation, we will see food offerings made in honour of various life events that are being respected. The offering of feast food tells our ancestors and spirits that they are being nourished. Feasts are prepared with various types of food depending on what is being recognized or celebrated. With spiritual growth in mind, the Knowledge Keepers in ceremony will know and understand what kinds of food needs to be prepared and provided. With this requirement, the honouring of life becomes strong and fulfilled. Our families will be provided with healing ways so as to show them how to walk strong.

friendship centre

Friendship centres were originally developed to provide referral services to Indigenous populations transitioning from reservations, Métis communities, and rural and remote areas to urban centres. There was an overarching need identified to assist people through these transitions in safe, caring ways that reduced the impacts of discrimination. Community leaders recognized the need for specialized agencies to assist their populations and by the mid 1950s, three newly formed friendship centres emerged throughout Canada: the Indian and Metis Friendship Centre in Winnipeg, the Coqualeetza Fellowship Club in Vancouver, and the North American Indian Club in Toronto.

inclusive education

Refers to the successful education of all students while acknowledging and respecting diversity. It is an approach to education that is based on the principles of acceptance and inclusion of all students. Students see themselves reflected in their curriculum, their physical surroundings, and the broader environment, in which diversity is honoured and all individuals are respected.

Indian Act

An amalgamation of pre-Confederation colonial legislation, introduced shortly after Confederation, which has been updated to meet the needs of the emerging Canadian state to expand and allow European settlement of the West and other regions. This Canadian legislation governs the federal government's legal and political relationship with Indigenous Peoples across Canada. It has been amended many times. The amendments made in the late 1800s and the first few decades of the 1900s are generally accepted as making the act more repressive and were intended to further the Canadian state's goals of assimilation. Since 1945, some of its more repressive and detrimental elements have been removed to comply with the international human rights law regarding civil and political rights, including opposition to genocide.

Indigenous

A collective name referring broadly to peoples whose traditional territories have been affected by displacement and settlement on their traditional territories by others. In North America, *Indigenous Peoples* is the collective name for the original peoples of North America and their descendants. In Canada, it refers

to First Nations, Métis, and Inuit Peoples. The term *Indigenous* has been used interchangeably in Canada with *Aboriginal*; however, today the term *Aboriginal* is usually only used within a legal context that involves section 35 rights under the 1982 *Constitution Act*.

Indigenous knowledge

Knowledge, know-how, and well-being that flow from the particular world views that Indigenous Peoples possess. The knowledge adapts according to the context, is constantly evolving, varying from place to place and from individual to individual. Indigenous knowledge relates, among other things, to political, economic, philosophical, linguistic, cultural, and spiritual concepts.

Inuit

The word *Inuit* means "the people" in the Inuit language and is used by Inuit to self-identify, to refer to themselves and to their culture. *Inuit* is also the plural form of *Inuk*. Sometimes people confuse Inuit with the Innu, who are Naskapi and Montagnais First Nations Peoples who live in northern Quebec and Labrador. The Innu are a distinct cultural group and are not Inuit. Inuit are the Indigenous people of Arctic Canada. The region is referred to by Inuit as "Inuit Nunagnat," and it includes the Inuvialuit region of the Northwest Territories, Nunavut, Nunavik (northern Quebec), Nunatsiavut (northern Labrador) and the ice, land, and water within these regions. Although the majority of Inuit live above the tree line, there are communities in the Inuvialuit region, Nunavik, and Nunatsiavut that live in treed areas.

Métis

Métis are people of First Nations and European ancestry. They have a unique culture that draws on the diversity of their ancestral origins, including Scottish, French, Ojibwé, and Cree. Prior to Canada's evolution to being a nation, Métis were the children of First Nations women and European men. While the initial offspring of these First Nations and European unions were individuals who possessed mixed ancestry, the gradual establishment of distinct Métis communities, outside of First Nations and European cultures and settlements, as well as the subsequent intermarriages between Métis women and Métis men, resulted in the genesis of a new Indigenous People—the Métis. Métis people maintain their own distinct culture, language (Michif), and traditions. The Canadian Consitution recognizes Métis people as one of the three Aboriginal (Indigenous) Peoples.

Métis refers to the Red River Métis, who are a distinct Indigenous nation made up of Métis citizens and settlements, also known as local communities and traditional territories. The term *Métis* is a French word meaning "mixed," which reflected the mixed ancestry of the Red River Métis. However, mixed ancestry alone does not constitute being Métis, who are further defined by a common ancestry, identity, culture, social and kinship relationships and, among other things, a shared history. The history of the Métis Nation is the history of the Red River Métis.

Moon Time

The time when the spiritual strength and universal connection of a person who menstruates allow protection for all. In Western terms, this is when a person who menstruates is experiencing their monthly blood flow.

offering

When hosting, attending, or receiving ceremony, an offering of various types may be given to those hosting the ceremony. There may be different types of offerings made, such as tobacco, other medicines, cloth, blankets, food items for a feast, and various types of clothing. if you are invited to a ceremony, ask what offerings are required for that Nation, community, and territory.

Powwow

A celebratory dance and musical ceremony or event for many Indigenous Peoples of Turtle Island. They are also a place for participants to show their pride and respect for their traditional cultures. There are two types of Powwows. There is the traditional Powwow to offer up the songs and dances for all the people, using singing, dancing, and drumming as a prayer. The second form are competitive Powwows, where dancers and musicians compete for prizes. Both types of Powwows celebrate the traditions of Indigenous people. If you are attending a Powwow, ask permission before taking photographs or videos. Never touch or handle dancers' or drummers' items without permission.

Pipe Ceremony

A sacred traditional pipe is a ceremonial item passed to a person who has demonstrated the ability to carry and use the particular type of pipe. Pipe carriers can and might carry various types of pipes. It is important to know your pipe carrier understands what ceremony you might be requesting. An offering will help the pipe carrier and the people requesting the ceremony know what pipe is required to make the ceremony fulfill what is needed for healing.

Protocol

The conventions of ceremony and etiquette observed in formal interactions between and among Nations.

racism

A mix of prejudice and power leading to domination and exploitation by the dominant or majority group over the non-dominant, minoritized, or racialized group. It asserts that the one group is supreme and superior, while the other is inferior. Racism is any individual action or institutional practice backed by institutional power that subordinates people because of their colour or ethnicity.

relationality

The concept that we are all interconnected to each other, to the natural environment, and to the spiritual world. These relationships bring about interdependencies and support sustainability.

reconciliation

As defined in *The Path to Reconciliation Act*, " 'Reconciliation' refers to the ongoing process of establishing and maintaining mutually respectful relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples in order to build trust, affirm historical agreements, address healing and create a more equitable and inclusive society" (1.1). Reconciliation is an ongoing process through which Indigenous Peoples, the governments, and all Canadians work cooperatively to establish and maintain a mutually respectful framework for living together, with the intention of fostering strong, healthy, and sustainable Indigenous Nations within a just Canada.

regalia

Traditional and ceremonial outfits required for various types of ceremony. Each ceremony conducted requires different types of outfits. They are not all the same. Never touch or handle dancers' or drummers' items without permission.

tobacco

Among many First Nations, tobacco is the medicine that is offered to spirits to ensure safe passage, or to make requests or ask questions of the spirit world. Tobacco is offered to others when seeking knowledge and in some communities may be expected when requesting spiritual knowledge, ceremony, or advice.

Traditional Knowledge systems

Traditional Knowledge systems are strongest when the ways of knowing, being, and doing are upheld by those people who follow the beliefs within those systems. With the beliefs come Protocols, sacred knowledge, and purpose for each to be promoted in a way that keeps its tradition unique to its purpose.

Treaties

Treaties are agreements made between the Government of Canada, Indigenous groups, and often provinces and territories that define ongoing rights and obligations on all sides. These agreements articulate the continuing Treaty Rights and benefits for each group. Treaty Rights and Indigenous Rights are inalienable, and recognized and affirmed in Section 35 of the *Constitution Act*, 1982, and are also a key part of the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*, which the Government of Canada has committed to adopt and harmonize with Canadian law. Treaties with Indigenous Peoples include both historic treaties with First Nations and modern treaties (also called comprehensive land claim agreements) with Indigenous groups.

In Manitoba, there are seven Treaties with First Nations (1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 10). These Numbered Treaties were signed from 1871 to 1921. Five Manitoba First Nations are not signatory to any treaty with the Government of Canada. These First Nations are Birdtail Sioux, Sioux Valley, Canupawakpa, Dakota Tipi, and Dakota Plains. *The Manitoba Act* of 1870 represents a *sui generis* Treaty in relation to the Red River Métis.

truth

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, established in 2008 under the terms of the *Indian Residential Schools Settlement Agreement*, had the following as part of their mandate:

> Reveal to Canadians the complex truth about the history and the ongoing legacy of the church-run residential schools, in a manner that fully documents the individual and collective harms perpetrated against Aboriginal peoples, and honours the resilience and courage of former students, their families, and communities. (TRC, *Final Report* 23)

It is this "complex truth" that is referred to in the context of "Truth and Reconciliation." The National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation holds a collection of statements, documents, and other materials to honour and keep safe the truths of the Indian Residential School experience for future generations.

Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada

Article Seven of the *Indian Residential Schools Settlement Agreement* called for the establishment of a Truth and Reconciliation Commission. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC) was officially launched in 2008. Between 2010 and 2014, the Commission held seven national events. Over 9000 Indian Residential School Survivors registered to attend these events, and it is presumed that more attended than registered. It is estimated that over 155,000 individuals attended the national events. In addition, regional events and town halls were organized, as well as 238 local hearings in 77 communities across Canada. In December 2015, the Final Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada included 94 Calls to Action directed at all levels of government.

world view

How we see life and how we follow the natural laws to find The Good Life/ *Mino-pimatisiwin* (Ininew)/*Mino Bimaadiziwin* (Anishinabemowin)/*honso aynai* (Dene)/*tokatakiya wichoni washte* (Dakota)/*minopimatitheewin* (Anisininimowin)/ ᐃᓐᓅᓯᖃᓯᐊᕐᓂᖅ (Inuktitut)/*Miyopimatishiwin* (Michif).

Appendix: Examples of Applicable and Non-applicable Grant Expenses

Applicable Expenses	Non-applicable Expenses
■ Elder and Knowledge Keeper honoraria ■ Elder and Knowledge Keeper mileage ■ supplies and materials specific to Elder and Knowledge Keeper engagement ■ Protocol—tobacco, tea, gift for Elder/ Knowledge Keeper ■ feasts that include Elders and Knowledge Keepers	■ school bus rentals ■ books which are not used to support Elder/Knowledge Keeper engagement (school and classroom library) ■ posters, rugs, and other decorative materials that are not used to support Elder/Knowledge Keeper engagement ■ substitute teachers for professional development

Bibliography

Alberta Education. "Welcoming Elders." *Our Words, Our Ways: Teaching First Nations, Métis and Inuit Learners*. 2005, pp. 71–74. Available online at www.learnalberta.ca/content/aswt/elders/documents/welcoming_elders.pdf.

British Columbia. Ministry of Education. *Aboriginal Worldviews and Perspectives in the Classroom: Moving Forward*. 2015. Available online at https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/education/administration/kindergarten-to-grade-12/indigenous-education/awp_moving_forward.pdf.

Can-SOLVE CKD Network. *Knowledge Keepers in Research*. Available online at https://cansolveckd.ca/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/Knowledge-Keepers-in-Research-Guidebook.pdf.

Commission on K to 12 Education. *Our Children's Success: Manitoba's Future: Report of the Commission on K to 12 Education*. 2020. Available online at www.edu.gov.mb.ca/educationreview/docs/commission-report/index.html.

Concordia University. Indigenous Directions Leadership Group. *Indigenous Elder and Community Protocols: Guidelines for Acknowledging Territory Protocols for Working with Elders, Knowledge Keepers, and Community Members*. 2019. Available online at www.concordia.ca/content/dam/concordia/offices/oce/IDLG/Indigenous-Elder-and-Community-Protocols.pdf.

First Nations Education Steering Committee. *First Nations Principles of Learning*. Available online at www.fnesc.ca/first-peoples-principles-of-learning/.

First Nations, Métis, & Inuit Education Association of Ontario. *Before Engaging with Indigenous Knowledge Consider . . .* Available online at https://fnmieao.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/ik_guidelines.pdf.

Hart, Michael Anthony. *Seeking Mino-Pimatisiwin: An Aboriginal Approach to Healing*. Fernwood Publishing, 2002.

Indian Tribes of Manitoba. *Wahbung: Our Tomorrows*. 1971, 40th anniversary edition, 2011, by Manitoba Indigenous Cultural Education Centre. Searchable PDF of original edition available online at https://manitobachiefs.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/Wahbung-Our-Tomorrows-Searchable.pdf.

Kirkness, Verna J., and Ray Barnhardt. "First Nations and Higher Education: The Four R's: Respect, Relevance, Reciprocity, Responsibility." *Knowledge across Cultures: A Contribution to Dialogue among Civilizations*, edited by Ruth Hayhoe and Julia Pan, Comparative Education Research Centre, University of Hong Kong, 2001, pp. 75-90.

Manitoba. *The Path to Reconciliation Act*. C.C.S.M. c. R30.5. King's Printer—Statutory Publications, 2016. Available online at https://web2.gov.mb.ca/laws/statutes/ccsm/r030-5e.php.

Manitoba Association of Friendship Centres. Home page. https://friendshipcentres.ca/. Accessed 24 Feb. 2023.

Manitoba Education and Early Childhood Learning (MEECL). *Elders and Knowledge Keepers in Schools Planning Template*. Unpublished.

———. *Mamàhtawisiwin: The Wonder We Are Born With—Indigenous Education Policy Framework*. 2022. Available online at www.edu.gov.mb.ca/iid/docs/mam%C3%A0htawisiwin_en.pdf.

———. *Manitoba's K to 12 Education Action Plan: A Roadmap in Response to the Recommendations of the Commission on K to 12 Education*. 2022. Available online at www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/action_plan/docs/actionplan_eng.pdf.

Manitoba Education and Training, and Indigenous Inclusion Directorate. *Creating Racism-Free Schools through Critical/Courageous Conversations on Race*. Manitoba Education and Training, 2017. Available online at www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/docs/support/racism_free/full_doc.pdf.

Manitoba First Nations Education Resource Centre Inc. *Wisdom of the Elders: Who is an Elder?* 2015.

Michell, Herman J. *Working with Elders and Indigenous Knowledge Systems: A Reader and Guide for Places of Higher Learning*. J. Charlton Publishing, 2011.

Overholt, Thomas W., and J. Barid Callicott. *Clothed-in-Fur and Other Tales: An Introduction to an Ojibwa World View*. University Press of America, 1982.

Queen's University. *Elder Protocol Handbook*. Available online at https://fdocuments.net/document/elder-protocol-handbook-queens-university-hand-drumming-sewing-beading-and.html?page=2.

Saskatchewan Learning. *Aboriginal Elders and Community Workers in Schools: A Guide for School Divisions and Their Partners.* 2001. Available online at https://treaty6education.lskysd.ca/sites/treaty6education.lskysd.ca/files/Aboriginal%20Elders%20and%20Community%20Workers%20in%20Schools.pdf.

Saskatchewan Office of the Treaty Commissioner. *Making the Connection: Cree First Nations kēhtē-ayak Thoughts on Education*. 2009. Available online at www.otc.ca/public/uploads/resource_photo/Making_the_Connection.pdf.

Treaty Relations Commission of Manitoba. Home page. www.trcm.ca/. Accessed 24 Feb. 2023.

Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada. *Final Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada. Volume One: Summary: Honouring the Truth, Reconciling for the Future*. Lorimer, 2015. Available online at https://publications.gc.ca/collections/collection_2015/trc/IR4-7-2015-eng.pdf.

University of Manitoba. "Cultural Protocols." *Culture and Protocol*, https://umanitoba.ca/indigenous/culture-and-protocol. Accessed 23 Feb. 2023.

University of Winnipeg. *Elder Protocols*. Policy: Pres #Elder Protocols, 20 Feb. 2014. Available online at www.uwinnipeg.ca/institutional-analysis/docs/policies/elder-protocols-policy.pdf.

Western and Northern Canadian Protocol for Collaboration in Basic Education. *WNCP Common Tool for Assessing and Validating Teaching and Learning Resources for Cultural Appropriateness and Historical Accuracy of First Nations, Métis and Inuit Content*.

———. *Our Way Is a Valid Way: Professional Educator Resource*. 2013. Available online at https://education.alberta.ca/media/563981/our-way-is-a-valid-way.pdf.

Wilson, Shaun. *Research Is Ceremony: Indigenous Research Methods*. Fernwood Publishing, 2008.