



Elder / Indigenous Guest Protocols

****If it is your first time booking an Indigenous Guest in your school, or if you have never worked with a particular guest before, please reach out to the Indigenous ed. Team for support*****

Respectful Acknowledgement

When inviting Indigenous guests into your classroom, it is important to have a good understanding of key terminology and definitions to avoid using language that may not be appropriate. First and foremost, the best way to be sure that you are using language that is preferred, is to contact the person and ASK. It's much better to ask someone about their heritage and what they'd like to be called than to inadvertently offend.

Invitation & Follow-Up

Preferably, requests are made to Elders in person - try to connect in person whenever possible. However, many Elders also accept requests by phone or email. If you are making a request to an Elder by phone or email, let the Elder know you have tobacco (First Nation / Métis - see tobacco protocol [HERE](#)) or a gift to offer, as well as an honourarium (see below) when you see/contact them, then make your request.

If the Elder agrees to accept the request, you must follow-up with a call a few days before the event to ensure they are still available for the occasion. Be prepared for the possibility they may change their minds if an unforeseen circumstance arises making it impossible for them to be in attendance. In this case, you can contact to determine whether another Elder may be available - however last minute bookings are not encouraged.

Respectful Care

Ensure to coordinate a host/escort for the Elder. The host/escort is responsible for:

- ensuring appropriate transportation to and from event;



- greeting and meeting the Elder upon arrival;
- taking care of the Elder until their departure (i.e. offer and assist with getting drinks, food, etc.).

In some cases, Elders may be accompanied by an “Elder’s helper.” This person will have an established relationship with the Elder and will be available to assist the Elder with whatever they need. Nevertheless, a host/escort should be arranged since the Elder and helper likely will not know their way around campus.

Photographs, audio, and/or video recordings are often not acceptable when an Elder is conducting a spiritual ceremony. Explicit consent must be received from the Elder before any recordings are taken. Often Elders will carry sacred items, such as pipes, qulliq, eagle feathers, medicine pouches – do not touch these items unless they give you permission.

In respect of the Elder, always ask permission and seek clarification if there is something you do not understand.

Honouraria and Compensation for Additional Costs

If the Elder accepts your tobacco/gift it is customary to provide another gift afterwards to show appreciation for the knowledge they shared. Historically, Elders were given food, clothing and other necessities in exchange for their help and guidance; contemporary gifts can be practical items such as towels, blankets, tea pot and cup set, etc. In addition to this offering it is also recommended to provide a monetary gift, in the form of an honourarium, in exchange for their assistance. (NOTE: It would be appropriate to contact the OCSB Indigenous Education team to clarify appropriate amounts.) The intention of offering an honourarium is to give what you can. Ensure their gift and honourarium are ready at the time of the event.

If you have questions about the honourarium, please don't hesitate to reach out to the OCSB Indigenous Education Lead.



Compensation for Additional Costs

Students, faculty and staff must make travel arrangements with the Elder or someone working on their behalf in scheduling their activities. Additional costs incurred by the Elder, such as parking, mileage, meals and accommodations, must be reimbursed. The Indigenous Education team has funding to support this, so please reach out to the team in order to confirm a booking.

Resources

[First Nations Pedagogy Online - Elders](#): An activity for online learning focusing on elders.

[How and When to Invite Indigenous Speakers to the Classroom](#)

[Indigenous Elder Definition](#) (Indigenous Corporate Training Inc.)

[Métis Nation of Ontario Senators](#)

[Elders in Schools Handbook](#) (Northwest Territories)