

## When should we invite an Elder to our school?

- ✓ To provide support & grounding for students;
- ✓ To share a blessing; stories
- ✓ To welcome participants to an event or special day;
- ✓ To share teachings on a specific topic or support culturally-oriented topics;
- ✓ To provide guidance on traditional ceremonies;
- ✓ To act as role model & mentor.



## How do I invite an Elder?

When planning initial contact, it is best to ask the person who initially referred the Elder to you for advice. Ensure you are giving the Elder time to think about your request, respond, & give input to your event and your recognition gift. Ensure you designate an 'Elder host' to greet them at the door & assist. Time spent with our Elders is a precious gift. Make time. Be present. Listen respectfully. Be in the moment.

### Recognition Gifting

Tobacco, sage, cedar, or sweet grass wrapped in a cloth bundle is often a gift offered to an Elder. Gifting an honorarium is also a way of acknowledging and respecting the teachings shared by an Elder.

## Arrow Lakes Aboriginal Education Advisory Council

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## Elder Protocol

SD 10 (Arrow Lakes)  
Student, Staff & Community  
Information Brochure

# Purpose

It is our hope that this brochure will strengthen staff awareness and understanding of cultural protocols when we invite and include Elders in our work. With our redesigned *BC Curriculum*, the implementation of the recommendations and Calls to Action from the *Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada*, and the importance of Traditional Knowledge, it is vital that we include our Elders with us on our journey. To do our best work in integrating First Peoples' Principles and weaving Indigenous ways of knowing into our learning, we need the support and guidance from our Elders.



## Who is an Elder?

Elders are essential to the health and strength of Indigenous communities. Within Indigenous cultures, Elders and traditional knowledge keepers are treated with respect for all of their many contributions. When thinking about inviting an Elder into your classroom or to a school event, there are a few things you might like to consider: who is an Elder, how do I invite them, what kind of gift should I offer?

## Role of Elders

Elders help us remember where we come from and help us to find the way forward. “Elder” refers to a person’s status in the community and cultural/traditional knowledge that person holds rather than their age. Elders work with our students, staff, and community in different ways. Elders can provide support to Indigenous students and staff as well as non-Indigenous students and staff who are working to increase their cultural awareness and competencies.

*Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada* “Calls to Action” can be found at: [http://www.trc.ca/websites/trcinstitution/File/2015/Findings/Calls\\_to\\_Action\\_English2.pdf](http://www.trc.ca/websites/trcinstitution/File/2015/Findings/Calls_to_Action_English2.pdf)  
Gratefully adapted from SD 8 (Kootenay Lake) Elder Protocol

