

USE OF FIRE

Policy C.2.Q

Frontier School Division recognizes the cultural, symbolic, and practical use of fire in our communities. The Division also recognizes the inherent risks associated with fire and the need for guidelines and procedures regarding the use of fire.

The intent of this policy and regulation is to identify the manageable risks associated with fire pits on Division properties and establish the appropriate protocols and procedures to maintain a safe learning environment. In accordance with Division policies, this document applies to any individuals, groups or organizations working with Division students and fire.

This policy is effective September 1, 2025.

Information: [C.2.F Risk Management](#)
[C.2.G Workplace Safety and Health](#)
[G.1.1 Accidents](#)
[Manitoba Physical Activity Safety in Schools](#)
[YouthSafe Manitoba](#)
[Manitoba Education: OUT-of-Class Safety Handbook](#)
[OWL Scotland – Fire Guidance](#)
[AFNorth Forest School Handbook](#)

Adopted June 12, 2025		
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1. General Protocols

- a. Fire pits on school properties are used as a teaching tool. This can include but is not limited to land-based learning, traditional cooking, cultural teachings, and ceremony.
- b. The use of a controlled fire on school grounds requires specific protocols that recognize inherent risk, risk mitigation, the safety of all involved and any other relevant Division policies.
- c. There are numerous risks associated with fire, for which safety procedures need to be developed to mitigate this risk.
- d. School administrators must be aware of and provide approval for any fires held on school property.
- e. Local fire/emergency services may need to be notified of the intent to have a fire on school property. If the community requires a fire permit, local procedures must be followed.

2. Recommended Procedures

a. Established Location

- i. Fire pits need to be positioned at least 25 feet (or 8 metres) away from any building in a designated burning area.
- ii. Whether mobile or a permanent fixture, fire pits should be positioned on a non-flammable surface, such as concrete, paving stones or gravel.
- iii. Fire pits should be constructed out of non-flammable material. Portable, steel fire pits are preferable to any permanent set ups on school grounds. This allows for flexible placement options and reduces vandalism.
- iv. Fire pits should be positioned away from any overhanging structures, such as tree limbs.
- v. If fire pits are designed as part of an arbor, a chimney for the release of smoke must be incorporated and the roof must be built from a non-flammable material.
- vi. Any designated locations identified for holding fires must be approved by the School Administrator and by the Facilities and Maintenance Department.

b. Use of Fire - Lighting the Fire and Fire Management

- i. Only burn clean, dry, unpainted, and untreated wood and no grass, leaves, brush, or tree prunings. Accelerants such as gasoline or liquid fire starter are prohibited.

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- ii. Fire should not be lit until all fire safety equipment is in place (See Exhibit – Fire Safety Checklist).
- iii. At least one adult must always remain at the fire and monitor changes to conditions and students.
- iv. A person trained in first aid should be available.
- v. The fire should not be lit on days with more than 25 km an hour winds, or during inclement environmental situations such as drought.
- vi. Local fire officials should be notified as early as possible of the intent to hold a fire. If a fire is advised against, no fire will be held. Review the Government of Manitoba – Conservation & Climate prior to starting a fire pit in the area.
- vii. A muster point is defined in case of an incident, which must be clear to all involved in the fire activity.
- viii. Learners should not be permitted to place anything in the fire unless specifically permitted and supervised.
- ix. Learners should not walk between the fire and those sitting around it but rather walk outside the circle.

c. **Extinguishing the Fire**

- i. Fire can be extinguished with three natural fire suppressants: water, sand, or dirt. While water is the preferred material, staff need to be aware of other methods.
- ii. Supervisors should strive to extinguish a fire only once it has burned down to mostly ashes.
- iii. Supervisors must ensure that all embers and ash are completely dampened and cooled.
- iv. The suppressant being poured over the embers should be done in a controlled manner, and supervisors should be aware of the possibility of hot steam being produced (with water).
- v. Once the embers are fully cooled, the fire pit should be cleaned, and all leftover matter disposed of.
- vi. If storage is available, the fire pit should be stored in a secure location to avoid vandalism and/or unmonitored fires.

Information: [Manitoba Conversation and Climate: Current Municipal Burn Restrictions](#)

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FIRE SAFETY CHECKLIST

Exhibit C.2.Q-EX1

The following checklist is a guide for staff related to fire safety considerations. If there are local situations that impact the items on this list, be sure to adjust them to suit specific community needs. Also included are suggested rules that can be shared with students.

- ☐ Fire pits must be a minimum of 8 metres (25 feet) away from any building, structure, fence, trees, overhead wires, etc.
- ☐ Check with local authorities regarding fire regulations and environmental conditions.
- ☐ Advise administrator(s) and any other necessary parties of your intent to hold a fire.
- ☐ Check local weather conditions prior to holding a fire.
- ☐ Have a conversation with students about fire safety.
- ☐ Be sure that all safety equipment is on hand and in good working order:
 - Fire gloves
 - Fire Blanket
 - Shovel
 - Garden Hose or Water Bucket/another suppressant
 - First Aid Kit
 - Fire extinguisher
 - Metal bucket with lid (for ashes)
- ☐ Muster point established with all learners in the event of an accident.

Safety Tips for Students

1. Be aware of how close you are to the fire.
2. Ask permission before putting anything in the fire, or wait for your teacher to instruct
3. Absolutely no touching of the fire with any part of the body.
4. If you are bothered by smoke, cover your face or if necessary, move to a different location around the fire.
5. When moving to a different location, move around the outside of the main group.

Suggestions for Fire Pits

Fire pits may follow these specifications:

- Be enclosed on all sides and constructed of masonry, rocks, concrete, heavy gauge metal or other non-combustible materials.
- Be at least 15 cm (6 in) in height above the surrounding grade but no more than 60 cm (24 in) in depth when measured from the top of the pit opening to the bottom of the pit.
- Have an opening that does not exceed 75 cm (2.5 ft) in diameter or an area of .56 m² (6 ft²) and in which neither the width nor length is greater than 75 cm (2.5 ft).
- Have a spark arrestor, grill or mesh with openings no larger than 12 mm (1/2 in) and which is used to cover the entire area of the fire pit opening.
- Have a cooking surface which does not exceed 75 cm (2.5 ft) in diameter or an area of .56m² (6 ft²), and in which neither the width nor length is greater than 75 m (2.5 ft).

Office Only: This checklist captures essential "to-do" items but also provides a record of the event. The reporting of use of fire on school grounds will enable senior administration to review the types and purposes of fire use. Furthermore, it will offer objective evidence of adherence to safety protocols in the rare event that an issue arises, ensuring that the safety process has been rigorously followed.

Purpose of fire:

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