

Pow-wow Etiquette

With Spring upon us, TNCDSB is looking forward to the upcoming *Ziigwan Niimi'iding* – *Spring Pow-wow*. This will take place at Couchiching First Nation Pow-wow Grounds.

What is a Pow-wow?

The Pow-wow is a spiritual, as well as social gathering where people come together to dance, sing, seek healing, meet old friends and make new ones.

The Powwow is a time to reaffirm the joy of life and reconnect with Mother Earth. Pow-wows preserve the rich heritage of Anishinaabe people.

There are two kinds of Pow-wows: Competition and Traditional.

The drum represents the heartbeat of Mother Earth.

Pow-wow Etiquette

- Do not walk counter clockwise. This is only allowed when attending a funeral or when honouring spirits that have passed on.
- Be quiet when someone is talking. Show respect.
- Offer tobacco to the drums. Each drum will have a tobacco bag to place the offering in.
- A good gift to give, is anything cloth like (e.g., towels, dish towels, blankets).
- Listen to the Master of Ceremonies, he will announce who is to dance and when.
- Always stand and remove hats during special songs. The Emcee will usually inform visitors when to stand. Special songs include the Grand Entry, Flag Songs, and Veteran's Songs.
- Ask permission before taking pictures of someone in regalia.



- During certain times of the Pow-wow, no pictures are allowed (e.g., Grand Entry, Honour songs or Flag songs).
- When invited by the emcee, visitors may participate in some social and intertribal dances.
- Do not touch a dancer's regalia without permission. These are not costumes and they may have special meaning to the dancers.
- Children should not run about in between dancers. Be respectful.
- It is not required, but it is encouraged that females wear a dress or long skirt.
- Do not carry children when you are in the dance area. It is like you are holding something to offer to the spirits.
- If you see a feather on the ground, do not pick it up. Let the arena director know (or an Elder) that you found one on the ground. Usually traditional dancers will dance around it and an Elder will pick it up.
- If there is food left over, don't throw it in the garbage. It will be collected and put in the fire for the ancestors to have. We are dancing with our ancestors at the Pow-wow, they are in spirit form, dancing with us.
- Powwows are a celebration of life, have fun!



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