

## Acknowledgment of Territory & Aboriginal Visitor Protocol Guidelines

When introducing an Aboriginal Cultural Guest to your school or classroom, or when beginning a ceremony such as a school assembly or meeting, it is typically customary to recognize the First Nations territory upon which you are located.

### Typical Introduction (before assemblies, meetings etc):

*"I would like to acknowledge that we are on traditional, unceded Stó:lō territory."*

### PROTOCOLS FOR CLASSROOM SIWAL SI'WES CULTURAL PRESENTATIONS

#### Before the presentation:

Teachers should prepare a small token or gift for the guest ahead of time. This can be very simple, for example, a card or a bookmark made and signed by the students.

#### Formal Introduction:

*"Today, on traditional, unceded Stó:lō territory, we are excited to welcome  
\_\_\_\_\_ into our class/school to present  
\_\_\_\_\_."*

If you like, have your students say *Éy swayel*, this Halq'emeylem for welcome.

#### During the presentation:

Students are expected to be on their very best behaviour. Teachers should be active participants in the cultural presentation, modelling respect, interest and engagement (and of course managing students who may not be demonstrating appropriate behaviour).

#### After the presentation:

*"We thank you for sharing your histories, your knowledge, your wisdom and life experiences with us."*

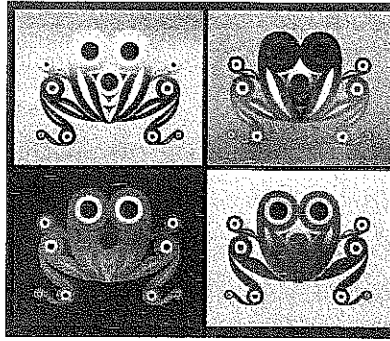
*"Thank you.          Merci.          Kwas'hoy."*

Students should be encouraged to raise their hands in the direction of the guest, palms facing inwards. Ensure that they do not "flap" their hands vigorously, it is a gentle gesture.

Choose a student to offer the gift to the guest.

If you like, students can end the presentation by singing *Kwetslóme tel síyaye*.

**IMPORTANT:** Protocols for welcoming elders (non-employees of MPSD) are more elaborate. More info on this to come at a later date!



## Acknowledging Traditional Territory

- Acknowledging territory is a way of honouring and showing respect for a group of people who have been living and working on this land from time immemorial.
- The only people who would *Welcome* to the Territory are the First Nations people who are traditionally/originally from that territory. The majority of school district personnel likely would *Acknowledge* Territory.
- Acknowledging territory is performed at any important function such as a school assembly, awards night, graduation, a celebration including Aboriginal communities etc. It can also be performed before an important meeting or presentation.
- The host is the person who would acknowledge territory, you would usually not ask a guest to acknowledge territory as it is not his/her function/event. It is not necessary to have an Aboriginal person acknowledge territory.
- Acknowledgement/Welcome is usually the first item on the agenda. (If you forget, just quickly acknowledge then, and don't worry about it!)
- For larger events it is always respectful to have a member of the local First Nation, preferably an Elder, perform a welcome, if possible. This would require an honorarium to be given to this person, to acknowledge his or her knowledge and respect within the community.
- Seek out the name of the traditional territory you will be on, if you are travelling to speak and work with people.