



POW WOW ETIQUETTE

Everyone is welcome to attend and join a Pow Wow. It is a wonderful opportunity for those unfamiliar with First Nations' culture to gain an increased understanding about our traditions. Here are some etiquette guidelines to follow:

- Under no circumstances are drugs or alcohol allowed on the Pow Wow grounds. If a person attends a Pow Wow intoxicated or brings drugs, that person is escorted off the Pow Wow grounds.
- It is important to remember that you are a guest at the Pow Wow and should conduct yourself as such. Be respectful of the traditions and customs. If you are a dancer; honour the protocol of the host group. If you are unsure of the correct protocol, please ask an adult in charge.
- The dance arena has been blessed and is spiritual ground. It should be treated with the same respect. Do not walk across the dance area to get to the other side; children/students are not to run into the arena. Walk into the dance area respectfully.
- Listen to the Master of Ceremonies for directions. This individual will make announcements about who is to dance, special ceremonies and when guests may participate. Everyone is welcome to participate in inter-tribal dances.
- Stand for the Grand Entry, the Flag Song and the Veteran's Song. Everyone should remove their hats.
- Allow Elders priority in all things.

- Children should behave respectfully at all times – do not run wild and disrespectfully. Teachers need to ensure their students are behaving respectfully.
- Put aside all Hollywood stereo types of what an ‘Indian’ is supposed to look and act like. First Nations people come in all shapes, sizes and colours. There is nothing more offensive than being asked “Are you an Indian? ... How much Indian are you? ... You don’t look like an Indian.” Be respectful with your actions and your words.
- The protocol involving picture taking varies according to custom and location. Certain dancers and ceremonies are not to be recorded or photographed. The Master of Ceremonies will tell you when pictures are not to be taken. Consider the privacy of the individuals and ask permission before you record them on film or tape. This includes spectators and craftsmen as well as the dancers and singers. Do not approach a dancer until after they have left the dancing arena. It is courteous to ask them if they would like you to send them a copy. Do not take pictures of the drummers while they are praying before they begin to drum. Also, remember to not enter the drum circle.
- A dancer’s clothing is Regalia, not a costume. A person’s Regalia is a highly valued possession. Honor it and the person wearing it. Do not ever touch a dancer’s Regalia without permission. Parts of the Regalia may be very fragile and easily damaged. Children are often fascinated with the feathers, fur, etc. and any touching may inadvertently cause damage. Please advise children to look with their eyes and not with their hands.

- Retrieving an Eagle Feather dropped during a Pow Wow is overseen by an elder. All spectators should rise, remove hats or caps and stand in silence. No camera may used at this time.



WE DANCE BECAUSE WE CAN!

The beautiful dancing and singing that you will witness at our gathering was once against the laws of Canada. Prior to 1968, native people were forced to practice their Spirituality 'underground'. Failure to comply with the 'ban' on ceremonies by the Canadian Government was punishable by imprisonment. The Government of Canada saw the great strength in our culture and feared our practices; therefore, it was made law to end to 'traditional' ways of life.

Despite the 'ban', the Ktunaxa people would go high into the mountains to practice such gatherings as you will see this weekend. These individuals who went into hiding with the ceremonies deserve a great deal of gratitude for their efforts to preserve a beautiful culture.

The present reference to this type of gathering is most commonly called a 'Pow Wow'. Historically, our people would call this gathering a 'War Dance' referring to Warriors preparing to go to war or returning from war. Warriors would 'dance out' their battle, the dancing tells a story of how they were victorious in battle or how their hunting was successful. Traditionally, the Ktunaxa people had only one style of dancing which was the 'Traditional' style of dancing. Regalia was not as elaborate as what it is today; however, both Traditional and Contemporary Regalia still hold a great significance to the dancers.

Today we dance because we can! We dance because we are proud. We dance because we are truly beautiful, unique people. We dance to ensure that never again will our rights as human beings be violated. We dance for ourselves, our

families, our people and the Higher Power. And, at this Youth Pow Wow ... we
dance with you! Welcome....enjoy!