

Chief Atahm School Vision

“We have a vision of a Secwepemc speaking community living in balance with nature”

Rationale

Chief Atahm School is grounded on the belief that knowledge of the language, traditional practices and beliefs of the Secwepemc will establish and maintain a healthy and balanced living environment. Individuals will be prepared for today’s world and help to protect the earth for *tellqelmucw*, the people to come and for all living beings.

(In Secwepemc version use *tellqelmucw*)

Foundational Belief

In the spirit of *etsxe*, or vision quest, we believe that:

- Everyone has a gift
- The family, school and community all have a responsibility to foster and develop each child’s gift
- An individual must train to develop their potential. It is an individual responsibility to maintain the hard work and discipline necessary for growth

The Chief Atahm School Program is founded on the following principles:

1. *Íwselktnéws* – we are all related
2. *Knucwetsút.s* – help yourself
3. *Mellélc* – take time for yourself
4. *Slexléxs* – Develop wisdom
5. *Qweqwetsín* – Honour the spiritual

Principle #1: K'weseltknéws – we are all related

We believe that:

- All beings are related
- All beings are equal
- We have a responsibility to each other and to the earth and therefore need to be mindful of our thoughts, beliefs and actions
- The school has a responsibility to nurture, educate and develop the value of k'weseltknéws
- The strength of our Nation is based on *knucwetwecw*, maintaining strong family connections and sense of community
- Families are important for nurturing, educating and developing healthy Secwepemc children

The principle of k'weseltknéws will be nurtured at Chief Atahm School through the following practices:

K'weseltknéws Practice #1: All beings are related

- Continuous and daily exposure/experience with the natural world
- Develop knowledge of the natural world: its patterns and cycles, systems, interconnectedness
- Storytelling (animism, all earth consists of sentient beings)
- Establish learning outcomes that contribute to real life issues and that assist in the continuation of Secwepemc traditions

K'weseltknéws Practice #2: All beings are equal

- Demonstrate the cycle of life/cause and effect interdependency of humans
- Establish an environment of respect, tolerance and personal responsibility
- Develop an awareness of the human impact (footprint) on the earth and promote less damaging alternatives and sustainability of all life systems
- Understand the role of the different beings on the earth
- Develop respect for all beings and life forms and teach that we are all equal

ᑭᖁᖁᖁᖁᖁ Practice #3: We have a responsibility to each other and to the earth

- Understand the meaning of relation and interrelationship
- Develop skills of friendship, tolerance, fair play, sharing and nurturing
- Practice the value of generosity and giving
- Develop a sense of *knucwetwecw*, a responsibility to each other within the school, family and community
- Develop a sense of responsibility to all beings within the natural world
- Model environmentally sound practices throughout all school activities, i.e. reduce, re-use, recycling, composting, etc.

ᑭᖁᖁᖁᖁᖁ Practice #4: The school has a responsibility to nurture, educate and develop the value of ᑭᖁᖁᖁᖁᖁ

- Establish routines and activities that promote unity amongst the school community
- Actively promote healthy relationships amongst students and within the school community
- Promote and maintain sustainable and environmentally responsible school practices.

ᑭᖁᖁᖁᖁᖁ Practice #5: The strength of our Nation is based on strong family connections and sense of community

- Identify the meaning of family
- Demonstrate the concept of unity
- Invite family participation in school activities
- Understand family history, Secwepemc kinship terms and genealogy
- Establish and maintain positive relationships with the wider community and the public
- Promote health and well-being within the school and community

Ǫweselktnéws Practice #6: Families are important for nurturing, educating and developing healthy Secwepemc children

- Provide educational resources and training to assist families in developing stronger parenting skills
- Promote parental engagement in their students' education
- Articulate the role of parents within their children's education
- Provide workshops, educational resources and opportunities to parents on healthy living and eating.

Principle #2: Knucwestsút.s – help yourself

We believe that:

- It is important to learn how to take care of yourself physically, emotionally, spiritually and intellectually
- Children need to be taught through direct experience, modeling and mentoring in order to develop strategies for problem solving and learning
- It is important to finish what you start and to persevere with your struggles
- The Secwepemc Nation requires strong, healthy, self-sufficient individuals to maintain a healthy Nation

The principle of knucwestsút.s will be nurtured at Chief Atahm School through the following practices:

Knucwestsút.s *Practice #1*: It is important to learn how to take care of yourself physically, emotionally, spiritually and intellectually

- Develop an understanding of the human body and its care
- Provide educational programs that develop life skills and that promote health and self-care

- Provides educational experiences that develop life long skills and self sufficiency in today's world
- Understand the relationship between health and productivity
- Foster personal spiritual development
- Foster emotional intelligence

Knucwestsút.s Practice #2: Children need to be taught through direct experience, modeling and mentoring in order to develop strategies for problem solving and learning

- Provide age appropriate experiences that develop problem solving and "learning by doing"
- Teach common household tasks and establish age-appropriate expectations and responsibilities
- Provide opportunities for observing learning situations; surround the children with varied experiences
- Use educational programs and resources to help develop problem solving skills

Knucwestsút.s Practice #3: It is important to finish what you start and to persevere with your struggles

- Provide learning opportunities that are practical and manageable within the boundaries of the classroom and that have a defined beginning and an end
- Encourage perseverance and acknowledge participation and completion of tasks

Knucwestsút.s Practice #4: The Secwepemc Nation requires strong, healthy, self-sufficient individuals to maintain a healthy Nation

- Discuss the Secwepemc values of hard work and perseverance
- Provide Secwepemc *stsptekwle* routinely that promotes hard work and determination
- Develop an awareness of the Secwepemc Nation and the role of the individual to help build a stronger Nation
- Work together as a school community to maintain Secwepemc food gathering responsibility
- Develop an awareness of food sources and healthy practices

Principle #3: Mellélc – take time for yourself and each other

We believe that:

- There needs to be a healthy balance between work and rest
- We need to gather together as family and community to celebrate life and re-affirm our commitment to Secwepemc values
- It is important to promote self-expression through the arts; drama, singing, dancing, painting, etc
- Humour is an integral part of Secwepemc life

The principle of mellélc will be nurtured at Chief Atahm School through the following practices:

Mellélc Practice #1: There needs to be a healthy balance between work and rest

- The school schedule will provide a consistent balance of activity to promote a general sense of well-being amongst staff and students.
- The school will model a traditional cycle of hard work and rest and social activities.

Mellélc Practice #2: We need to gather together as family and community to celebrate life and re-affirm our commitment to Secwepemc values

- The school will encourage the involvement of parents and community several times throughout the year in school gatherings and celebrations.
- The school will host a yearly gathering of the school community (melq'wilc) in order to revisit the school vision and programs.
- We will work towards modeling Secwepemc values throughout all school functions.

Mellélc Practice #3: It is important to promote self-expression through the arts; drama, singing, dancing, painting, etc.

- Provide varied experiences of art forms and expressions.
- Promote the ongoing pursuit of self-expression through the arts
- Maintain a program celebrating traditional Secwepemc arts and expression
- Provide a consistent commitment to fostering artistic growth and development.

Mellélc Practice #4: Humour is an integral part of Secwepemc life

- Foster an appreciation of Secwepemc humour and model healthy expressions of humour.
- Ongoing exposure to the Secwepemc storytelling art form

Principle #4: Slexléxs – Develop wisdom

We believe that:

- Developing knowledge in many areas will strengthen a child and assist in achieving individual potential
- Secwepemc traditions, culture, language and history are applicable today
- All people are natural born learners
- Different approaches and strategies must be used by the learner to access different sources of knowledge
- Learning is a lifelong process that occurs in all situations: home, community, work, school, etc.

The principle of *slexléxs* will be nurtured at Chief Atahm School through the following practices:

Slexléxs Practice #1: Developing knowledge in many areas will strengthen a child and assist in achieving individual potential and enhance each child's gifts

- Present a varied approach to teaching and learning to allow for individual style's of learning and development
- Understand that every child requires a wide variety of experiences and educational approaches to develop all areas of intelligence.
- Educational goals need to be flexible in order to give space for the development of each individual's unique gift
- To strive to improve the school's program to provide the best possible educational program to support each child's development

Slexléxs Practice #2: Secwepemc traditions, culture, language and history are applicable today

- Provide a variety of traditional learning experiences and resources based on traditional values and practices
- Ensure that the school environment has positive Secwepemc role models who are knowledgeable about Secwepemc traditions, culture and history.
- Integrate contemporary learning with traditional teachings
- Understand Secwepemc history and promote discussion and personal involvement in our shared history.
- Model the use of the Secwepemc language as a living, vital and contemporary language that can be used as an everyday language of communication for the Secwepemc people.

Sléxléxs *Practice #3*: All people are natural born learners

- Children have an innate desire to learn. It is important to provide a variety of experiences to foster and maintain the desire to learn.
- Establish an environment and expectation of lifelong learning
- Provide educational resources that encourage exploration and intellectual growth.

Sléxléxs *Practice #4*: Different approaches and strategies are used to access different sources of knowledge

- Provide students with strategies and tools for learning
- Encourage personal responsibility for learning
- Allow for student exploration and understanding of their preferred learning styles
- Develop an understanding of multiple intelligences or different sources of knowledge

Sléxléxs *Practice #5*: Learning is a lifelong process that occurs in all situations: home, community, work, school, etc.

- Explore learning in environments outside of the school
- Encourage participation and sharing of knowledge of community members

Principle #5: Qweqwetsín – honour your connection to the spiritual

We believe that:

- We are spiritual beings interrelated with all other beings
- We are dependant on what the earth provides. We acknowledge that there is a reciprocal relationship between humans and the universe. We must give back when we take, show gratitude for earth's gifts

The principle of qweqwetsín will be nurtured at Chief Atahm School through the following practices:

Qweqwetsín Practice #1: We are spiritual beings interrelated with all other beings

- Integrate Secwepemc spiritual teachings within all school programs
- Share Secwepemc stories that teach about the interrelatedness of all things
- Explore the theme of interrelatedness within all school programs.

Qweqwetsín Practice #2: We are dependent on what the earth provides. We acknowledge that there is a reciprocal relationship between humans and the universe. We must give back what we take from the earth and show gratitude for earth's gifts

- Model the concept of "giving back"
- Show appreciation for what the earth provides through prayer, stories, and other forms of expression
- Take responsibility for helping to maintain and protect food gathering areas.
- Discuss the values of respect and responsibility and how it pertains to our role as humans in the universe