



Elder-in-Residence

Nehiyaw Language • Land • Natural Laws • Ceremony • Traditional Learning

Location	Cadotte Lake School
Authority	Woodland Cree First Nation Education Authority (WCFNEA)
Reports to	Principal, Cadotte Lake School
Position	Full-time, site-based
Housing	Eligible for single staff housing
Preference	Preference will be given to qualified Woodland Cree First Nation members
Closing	Open until a suitable candidate is selected

The Opportunity

WCFNEA is seeking a respected and caring Elder-in-Residence to help children, youth, and staff strengthen their connection to Nehiyaw language, lands, natural laws, ceremony, and traditional learning. Through relationships, stories, teachings, time on the land, and participation in school life, the Elder-in-Residence will support a learning environment where Nehiyaw identity, knowledge, values, and ways of being are visible, honoured, and lived.

This role is grounded in presence, trust, humility, and community relationship. The Elder-in-Residence will work alongside students, families, staff, school leadership, other Elders, and Knowledge Keepers. The successful candidate will help guide culturally safe and respectful learning while recognizing that some teachings, ceremonies, medicines, places, and knowledge are sacred, seasonal, gender-specific, family-held, or otherwise not appropriate for recording or broad sharing.

The Person We Hope to Welcome

- A person recognized for cultural knowledge, good character, sound judgment, kindness, patience, and commitment to children and youth.
- A Nehiyaw language speaker or knowledgeable learner who can meaningfully support everyday language use and cultural understanding.
- A relationship-builder who is comfortable working with young children, adolescents, families, educators, and community members.
- A person who understands local protocols and is willing to guide the school in approaching ceremony, traditional knowledge, medicines, stories, and land-based activities respectfully.

Key Responsibilities

1. Nehiyaw Language and Cultural Learning

- Support children, youth, and staff in learning and using Nehiyaw language through conversation, stories, songs, place names, seasonal activities, classroom visits, and daily school life.
- Share teachings about Nehiyaw identity, values, kinship, responsibilities, history, and ways of knowing in age-appropriate and culturally respectful ways.
- Help staff connect curriculum and school programming with local language, culture, community knowledge, and lived experience.
- Encourage staff and students as learners while creating a welcoming environment where people can practise without fear of making mistakes.

2. Land-Based Learning and Natural Laws

- Plan and participate in meaningful land-based learning experiences with students and staff across seasons.
- Teach through direct experience about relationships with the land, water, plants, animals, weather, harvesting, food, medicines, stewardship, and community responsibilities, within the Elder's knowledge and appropriate local protocols.
- Help students understand natural laws, reciprocity, respect, responsibility, interconnectedness, and the consequences of human choices.
- Work with teachers and school leadership to ensure activities are age-appropriate, well prepared, inclusive, and consistent with school safety plans.

3. Ceremony and Traditional Learning

- Guide or support school ceremonies, prayers, feasts, seasonal observances, and traditional practices according to the Elder's role, knowledge, and community protocols.
- Advise staff and students about respectful preparation, participation, offerings, conduct, and follow-up connected with ceremony and cultural activities.
- Identify when another Elder, Knowledge Keeper, language speaker, helper, or community member should be invited because a teaching falls outside the Elder-in-Residence's role or knowledge.
- Protect sacred and private knowledge by clearly guiding what may be taught, photographed, recorded, reproduced, stored, or shared.

4. Student Mentorship and Wellness

- Be a consistent, visible, and trusted presence for children and youth through individual conversations, small groups, classroom learning, school events, and time on the land.

- Offer culturally grounded encouragement, guidance, listening, and mentorship while maintaining appropriate professional boundaries and student confidentiality.
- Support belonging, identity, confidence, responsibility, positive relationships, attendance, engagement, and connection to community.
- Work with school staff when a student requires additional educational, wellness, safeguarding, or professional support.

Key Responsibilities (continued)

5. Staff Learning and Cultural Guidance

- Support staff learning about Nehiyaw language, local history, Treaty relationships, cultural safety, natural laws, land-based learning, and respectful relationships with families and community.
- Help educators reflect on how classroom routines, curriculum, assessment, celebrations, and school practices can better honour Nehiyaw learners and community priorities.
- Provide kind, direct guidance when cultural protocols are misunderstood or when a different approach is needed.
- Participate in staff learning, planning, and selected meetings where the Elder's perspective can strengthen decisions affecting children and youth.

6. Community Relationships and Program Development

- Build and maintain respectful relationships with families, Elders, Knowledge Keepers, language speakers, land users, cultural helpers, and community organizations.
- Work with school leadership to plan an annual cycle of language, cultural, ceremonial, and land-based learning opportunities.
- Help identify people, places, materials, transportation, equipment, and resources needed for cultural and land-based programming.
- Represent the school respectfully at community events and support opportunities that connect students with their Nation and territory.

Qualifications and Community Standing

Formal teaching credentials are not required. WCFNEA will consider the whole person, including lived experience, cultural knowledge, language ability, community trust, and the ability to build safe and respectful relationships with children and youth.

- Demonstrated knowledge of Nehiyaw language, culture, lands, natural laws, ceremony, traditional teachings, and local protocols.
- Recognized standing, trust, and positive relationships within the community or communities where the candidate has lived and served.
- Experience sharing knowledge with children, youth, families, or community groups in ways that are patient, engaging, and age-appropriate.
- Ability to collaborate with school staff while maintaining the integrity of Elder knowledge, authority, and cultural protocols.
- Ability to participate in land-based activities and travel locally, with reasonable accommodation where required.

- Willingness to complete employment screening and school-required orientation appropriate to a role working closely with children and youth.

Assets

- Fluency or strong conversational ability in the local Nehiyaw language.
- Experience leading or supporting camps, seasonal activities, harvesting, traditional food preparation, medicines, arts, stories, songs, games, or other land-based and cultural learning.
- Experience working in a school, youth program, cultural program, or community service setting.
- A valid driver's licence, First Aid/CPR, or other training helpful for land-based programming.

Employment, housing, and preference

This is a full-time WCFNEA position and is eligible for single staff housing, subject to housing availability and WCFNEA terms. Preference will be given to qualified Woodland Cree First Nation members. Compensation and benefits will be discussed with shortlisted candidates in accordance with WCFNEA employment practices.

How to Apply or Express Interest

Interested applicants may submit a résumé or letter describing their experience, language knowledge, cultural and land-based strengths, and relationship with community. Applicants may also provide the names of community references who can speak to their character, knowledge, and work with children or youth. Application information is available through www.wcfnea.ca.

WCFNEA welcomes respectful expressions of interest from people who may not normally apply through a conventional employment process. Assistance with preparing an application can be requested through the Education Authority.

Help our children and youth know who they are, where they come from, and how to live in good relationship.