

National Day for Truth and Reconciliation

September 30th



Orange Shirt Day

Orange Shirt Day began in Williams Lake in 2013 to create awareness of the impacts of Indian Residential Schools on generations of Indigenous people. September 30th was chosen as the day to honour the students who survived going to an Indian Residential School and to remember those who did not come home. September 30th was chosen as this was the time when children as young as three years old were taken from their homes and brought to the schools. September is also a good time to reflect on the history of Indigenous peoples and how we will move forward in reconciliation, as a school community, for the year. **Wear an orange shirt** on the day to honour and remember those impacted by the Residential School System.

National Day for Truth and Reconciliation

The National Day for Truth and Reconciliation was established in response to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission’s Call to Action 80. A bill was tabled in March 2019 to establish a national holiday and tabled again in September 2020. After 215 bodies were found in unmarked graves at the former Kamloops Indian Residential School on May 28, 2021 the bill was fast tracked, passed, and received royal assent on June 3, 2021.

“The National Day for Truth and Reconciliation recognizes that at least 150,000 Indigenous children from across the country were forcibly separated from their families and their communities. Children were brought to residential schools where too many experienced abuse and were removed from their cultures, languages, and traditions. This federal day builds on the momentum of Orange Shirt Day, which was inspired by the story of Phyllis Webstad and chosen by Indigenous peoples to remember the legacy of residential schools and promote the path of reconciliation... This year, the tragic locating of unmarked graves at former residential school sites across the country has reminded us of not only the impacts of colonialism and the harsh realities of our collective past, but also the work that is paramount to advancing reconciliation in Canada. Today, we also recognize the harms, injustices, and intergenerational trauma that Indigenous peoples have faced – and continue to face – because of the residential school system, systemic racism, and the discrimination that persists in our society. We must all learn about the history and legacy of residential schools. It’s only by facing these hard truths, and righting these wrongs, that we can move forward together toward a more positive, fair, and better future.”

The Right Honourable Justin Trudeau, June 2021

Why an orange shirt?

Orange Shirt Day commemorates First Nations residential school survivor, Phyllis Webstad’s story. In 1973, on her first day at St. Joseph Mission Residential School they took her orange shirt along with her other belongings and never gave them back. This became a symbol of the loss of identity and culture of Indigenous people and a way to never forget the history of forced assimilation. The national day is one of remembrance, reconciliation and education of our shared past and a symbol of support for our shared future.

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“The road we travel is equal in importance to the destination we seek. There are no shortcuts. When it comes to truth and reconciliation, we are all forced to go the distance.”

The Honourable Murray Sinclair

We acknowledge and thank the First Peoples of the hən̓q̓əmin̓əm̓ language group on whose unceded territories we live and where the xʷməθkʷəy̓əm people continue their traditions and cultural education. We are grateful for the opportunity to learn, create meaningful relationships and make positive contributions to education in this territory.