

Friday, September 27, 2019

## Every Child Matters: Greater Victoria Schools participate in Orange Shirt Day

**VICTORIA, BC** – Students and staff will proudly wear orange on Monday to honour residential school survivors and reflect on their stories and experiences. Each year, schools participate in activities and classroom discussions with a focus on steps towards reconciliation. This has been an annual tradition since 2013, the inaugural Orange Shirt Day.

Orange Shirt Day is an event that grew from Phyllis Jack-Webstad’s story of having her sparkly new orange shirt taken away on her first day at St. Joseph Mission Residential School. Her story has since been shared broadly creating an opportunity to reflect and raise awareness about the residential school legacy.

“Public education has a critical role to play in the truth-telling that will enable meaningful reconciliation,” shared Board Chair Jordan Watters. “We cannot change the past but we can learn from it and move forward together in a good way. Orange Shirt Day is an important opportunity to have conversations about our collective history and renew and inspire a commitment to advancing the process of Canadian reconciliation.”

“Schools are being responsive to the Reconciliation Commission of Canada Final Report: Calls to Action on Education,” shared Superintendent Shelley Green. “Our newly revised curriculum now includes the history of the residential school system to help educate all students and build their intercultural understanding. It is incredibly important that we recognize the past and weave Indigenous knowledge and ways of knowing into our schools. We strongly encourage everyone to wear an orange shirt to demonstrate our District’s commitment to reconciliation.”

Greater Victoria School District students will participate in Victoria’s *Xe xe Smun eem*—Orange Shirt Day: Every Child Matters event at Centennial Square from 12 p.m. noon to 2:00 p.m. on Monday, September 30<sup>th</sup>. Secondary students will be performing a reconciliation song and drumming in honour of the lives lost, the survivors and their families. Media is invited to attend.

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**For more information, please contact:**

**Lisa McPhail**

Communications & Community Engagement

Greater Victoria School District No. 61

Office: 250.475.4103

 [www.sd61.bc.ca](http://www.sd61.bc.ca) |   @sd61schools

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