



## School District #82 (Coast Mountains)

# KITIMAT CITY HIGH

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Dear Parents/Guardians:

September 21, 2020

### **RE: Orange Shirt Day: Every Child Matters – September 30, 2020**

*It is important to recognize Orange Shirt Day as part of reconciliation which is one of our obligations under the requirements of the Truth and Reconciliation Calls to Action. The residential school experience had a wide-sweeping negative effect on those who were survivors of residential schools and continues to have trickle-down effects on Indigenous families and communities.*

*For your information, we share the following about the origins of Orange Shirt Day:*

- *Orange Shirt Day began in Williams Lake in 2013 and has since spread to schools across B.C. and Canada.*
- **Orange Shirt Day is celebrated across Canada every September 30.** It is a day when we honour the Indigenous children who were sent away to residential schools in Canada and to learn more about the history of those schools.
- Residential schools were church-run schools where approximately 150,000 Métis, Inuit and First Nations children were sent between the 1860s and the 1990s. The schools harmed Indigenous children by removing them from their families, forcing them to speak English or French instead of their ancestral languages, disconnecting them from their culture and traditions and forcing them to adopt Christianity in order to assimilate into Canadian society. The government has since acknowledged that this approach was wrong, cruel and ineffective, and offered an official apology to the Indigenous peoples of Canada in 2008.

**Why September 30?** September 30 falls during the time of year when Indigenous children were taken away to residential school.

**Why an “orange shirt”?** The “orange shirt” in Orange Shirt Day refers to the new shirt that Phyllis Webstad was given to her by her grandmother for her first day of school at St. Joseph’s Mission residential school in B.C. When Phyllis got to school, they took away her clothes, including her new shirt. It was never returned. To Phyllis, the colour orange has always reminded her of her experiences at residential school and, as she has said, “how my feelings didn’t matter, how no one cared and I felt like I was worth nothing. All of us little children were crying and no one cared”.

The message that Phyllis wants to pass along on Orange Shirt Day – and every day – is that every child matters. Orange Shirt Day was started by Phyllis to educate people about residential schools and fight racism and bullying.

Yours sincerely,

*Nancy Tormene*

**Nancy Tormene - Principal**  
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