

September 26, 2016

**Orange Shirt Day** is a day set aside in September to honour the survivors of Indian residential schools. This emerged from a residential school commemoration event in Williams Lake, BC in 2013. It grew out of Phyllis Jack Webstad's story of her first day at the St. Joseph's Mission Residential School when she proudly wore a bright orange shirt bought by her grandmother. The orange shirt reflected her excitement about attending the first day of school. The school staff would not allow her to wear the shirt and took it away from her. From that moment, the colour orange reminded her that there was no one at school who cared about her feelings and well-being.

September was selected in remembrance of the time of year when First Nations children were gathered and taken to residential schools. Orange Shirt Day is meant to set the stage for learning and practice anti-bullying and anti-racism in schools. It is an opportunity for schools and communities to come together in a spirit of truth and reconciliation and hope for the lives of children.

This year Orange Shirt Day falls on September 30, the curriculum implementation day in Burnaby so many schools are planning events and activities to honour Orange Shirt Day throughout the week. Burnaby School District supports wearing orange on September 29th & 30th – the fourth annual Orange Shirt Day – to bring home a message about residential schools and remind us that every student who enters our classrooms is someone's child, and that every child matters.

**Thank you for your interest in public education in Burnaby.**

**Harman Pandher, Vice-Chair**  
**Burnaby Board of Education**