



# ECOLE CRESCENT PARK SCHOOL

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September 28, 2016

Dear Parents:

On September 30, we are encouraging all students to wear an orange shirt to honour those who survived Indian Residential Schools (IRS) and remember those that didn't. The motto: Every Child Matters is a reminder that every child, regardless of background, is important, and is a commitment that we will do all we can to ensure students' self-esteem and well-being.

## The Story Behind Orange Shirt Day

"I went to the Mission for one year. I had just turned 6 years old. We never had very much money, and there was no welfare, but somehow my granny managed to buy me a new outfit to go to the Mission School in. I remember going to Robinson's store and picking out a shiny orange shirt. It had eyelets and lace, and I felt so pretty in that shirt and excited to be going to school! Of course, when I got to the Mission, they stripped me, and took away my clothes, including the orange shirt. I never saw it again, except on other kids. I didn't understand why they wouldn't give it back to me, it was mine! Since then the colour orange has always reminded me of that and how my feelings didn't matter, how no one cared and how I felt like I was worth nothing. I finally get it, that the feeling of worthlessness and insignificance, ingrained in me from my first day at the mission, affected the way I lived my life for many years...I want my orange shirt back!"

This orange shirt taken from one child, is a symbol of the many losses experienced by thousands of aboriginal students, and their families and communities, over several generations including: loss of family, language, culture, freedom, parenting, self-esteem and worth, and of the painful experiences of abuse and neglect. Wearing an orange shirt allows participants to take a stand against those things that undermine children's self-esteem, and to make a commitment to anti-racism and anti-bullying in general.

The date was chosen because it is the time of year that children were taken from their homes to residential schools, and because it is an opportunity to set the stage for anti-racism and anti-bullying policies for the coming school year. Orange Shirt Day is an opportunity for Aboriginal people, local governments, schools and communities to come together in the spirit of reconciliation and hope for generations of children to come.

If your child does not have an orange shirt, we encourage them to wear any piece of orange clothing.

Respectfully,

Mr. D. A'Bear

Principal