

Dear RPPS Parents/Guardians,

As a school community, we recognize the importance of engaging in learning activities to raise awareness and understanding of the devastating impact of Canada's residential school system. This is a vital part of our commitment to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's (TRC) Calls to Action.

Since 2013, Orange Shirt Day has been observed on 30 September to honour the lives and experiences of Indigenous children who endured the residential school system in Canada. Last spring, the federal government enacted legislation recognizing September 30th as a federal statutory holiday commemorating National Day for Truth and Reconciliation. This action was in response to [Truth and Reconciliation Commission's \(TRC\) Calls to Action #80](#).

Please note, this is not a statutory holiday in Ontario and schools, including RPPS, will be open. However, some Indigenous families may decide to keep their children home on that day to engage in activities with family and community.

Indigenous self identification is a confidential process and should not be understood as a requirement for students to be away from school on this important day. There is no expectation that students who are away from school on this day participate in any school-related activities. Teachers have also been asked to not schedule tests or make assignments due on 30 September.

This meaningful day signals a year-long, ongoing commitment to learning that centres the truth of the harmful effects of colonialism, including the residential schools system that caused the loss of Indigenous lives, languages and traditions for generations.

How Rockcliffe Park PS is participating in the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation

Learning activities planned for 30 September will focus on developing student and staff understanding of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's 94 Calls to Action and commemorating those whose lives were impacted by residential school experiences. Below are some of the ways this day will be recognized at Rockcliffe Park:

- [Virtual opening exercises \(9:00 am\)](#) featuring a virtual opening address by Algonquin Knowledge Keeper Monique Manatch and a land acknowledgment by OCDSB Director of Education Camille Williams-Taylor.
- Classroom learning activities to deepen understanding of truth and reconciliation.
- Classroom discussions and reflections
- The unveiling of the Every Child Matters bench
- [Virtual closing \(2:30 pm\)](#) offered by Ms. Manatch
- You are welcome to join us by clicking on the links provided

We encourage you to review the [Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action](#) and [Spirit Bear's Guide to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada Calls to Action](#) (Youth friendly language outlines the 94 calls to action).

How the OCDSB is marking this day

Visit the [OCDSB National Truth and Reconciliation Day webpage](#) to learn more about:

- Actions parents and students can take
- Community and mental health resources for Indigenous students and families

Kind regards,

Heather Mace

Grateful Principal