

Finding Inuvialuit children lost  
in the residential school system

# FACTBOOK



**INUVIALUIT**  
REGIONAL CORPORATION





The All Saints Hospital (above) was in operation in 1937 and the Immaculate Conception Roman Catholic Hospital and Residential School (below) was established in 1929 and closed in 1959. Both operated at Aklavik, NT, and served Inuit and First Nations People.







# FINDING INUVIALUIT CHILDREN LOST IN THE RESIDENTIAL SCHOOL SYSTEM

## FACTBOOK

Highlights of the history of the residential school system, its impacts and the ongoing reconciliation efforts in the Inuvialuit Settlement Region, Northwest Territories and Canada.

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Cover photo: Women's auxiliary group at the Akaitcho Hall Residence, Yellowknife, Northwest Territories. Inuvialuit community members have identified in the front row, left to right: Ruby Sidney and Sarah Ann Gardlund. Please contact IRC if you can identify any others. Photo credit: Erin Firth.

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## Message from the Chair

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**The wellbeing of our culture and our children starts with the family.**

St. John's Residential School at Shingle Point was the first residential school created specifically for Inuit children. It was built in the fall of 1929. Grolier Hall in Inuvik, which was the last residential school built in Canada, closed in 1997. Over these 70 years, four generations of children were separated from their families and subjected to the residential school system. Some of these children did not return home.

This is a tragedy, and Inuvialuit families continue to suffer because they do not know what happened to their children, or if they are resting respectfully.



The first-ever Inuvialuit law, Inuvialuit Qitunrariit Inuuniarnikkun Maligaksat is a necessary outcome of the intergenerational effects of residential schools, and an important part of our work to lift-up the Inuvialuit; to be a proud model of self-government.



This project builds on the work of the Nanilavut initiative, which focused on finding Inuvialuit lost in the tuberculosis (TB) epidemic. The goal of this residential schools project is to make sure that the lost children are remembered with dignity, and their families can find some closure.

This will not be quick or easy work. Inuvialuit continue to struggle with the legacy of the residential school system, and the death of a child is always traumatic for a family, no matter how long ago it happened. I do believe though, that this initiative will help heal families and communities and to bring much-needed closure to loved ones. It rightly honours the memory of our lost children, and actively engages our young people today in the work of holding onto our history, while ensuring a healthy future for Inuvialuit generations to come.

I hope you will join us in this important and difficult work.



**DUANE NINGAQSIQ SMITH**  
*IRC Chair and Chief Executive Officer*



## TAKING CARE

*We recognize this publication contains information that may be difficult for many to read, and that our efforts to honour the lost as well as the survivors may act as an unwelcome reminder of the hardships suffered by generations of Inuvialuit.*

*A national residential school crisis line offers emotional support and crisis referral services for residential school survivors and their families. Call toll-free 1-866-925-4419. This service is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.*

*The Hope for Wellness help line also offers support to all Indigenous Peoples. Counsellors are available by phone or online chat. This service is available in English and French, and, by request, in Cree, Ojibway, and Inuktitut. Call toll-free 1-855-242-3310 or connect to the online chat at [www.hopeforwellness.ca](http://www.hopeforwellness.ca)*

*The Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls crisis line is available to provide emotional support and crisis referral services to individuals impacted by the issue of missing and murdered Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ individuals. Call toll-free 1-844-413-6649. This service is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.*

# Introduction

This factbook provides information about plans for locating, documenting and memorializing burial sites of Inuit children lost in Canada's residential school system. The publication also serves as an educational tool about some of the history of the residential school system, its impacts and the ongoing reconciliation efforts in the Inuvialuit Settlement Region, Northwest Territories and Canada.

Much of the content comes from other sources and is used with permission. One such source is the Government of the Northwest Territories' Living Well Together training. The program is available in eight self-directed modules and can be done, free of charge, on the Diversity and Inclusion page of the GNWT website [fin.gov.nt.ca/en/services/diversity-and-inclusion/living-well-together](https://fin.gov.nt.ca/en/services/diversity-and-inclusion/living-well-together). The Truth Series (modules 2-5) focuses on awareness about colonization, residential schools and Indigenous—non-Indigenous relations. The Reconciliation Series (modules 6-8) focuses on developing cultural sensitivity and the practice of reconciliation (“Living Well Together”).

Government of the Northwest Territories departments of Finance, Education, Culture and Employment, and Health and Social Services collaborated with Indigenous elders, community members and artists to ensure the training reflected the diverse and authentic perspectives of Indigenous Peoples from across the North.



# The Project

Addressing the harms suffered by survivors, their families and communities is at the heart of reconciliation and is essential to renewing and building relationships with Indigenous Peoples, governments and all Canadians. Across the Beaufort Delta, there are many people who tell stories of relatives who left home on a boat to go to a residential school, never to return. Now the Inuvialuit Regional Corporation (IRC) is planning to find those children and mark their resting places. Locating unmarked graves at former residential school sites across Canada is a tragic reminder of the abuse that many Indigenous children suffered in these institutions.

On March 6, 2024, Duane Smith, chair and CEO of IRC, and the Honourable Gary Anandasangaree, minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs, met to announce new funding for IRC. IRC received \$854,437 over two years to conduct research, gather knowledge, commemorate the lost and engage with communities throughout the Inuvialuit Settlement Region where children attended schools in Aklavik, Inuvik, Paulatuk, Sachs Harbour, Tuktoyaktuk and Ulukhaktok.

Government of Canada is working with survivors, Indigenous leaders and affected families and communities to address historical wrongs and the lasting physical, emotional, mental and spiritual harms related to the legacy of residential schools. Part of this work includes efforts to locate and memorialize unmarked graves and burial sites, and to commemorate the lives of all children who attended residential schools. These initiatives respond to Truth and Reconciliation Commission Calls to Action 72 to 76 – Missing Children and Burial Information.

# Residential Schools - Product of Colonial Powers



In the 1880s, in conjunction with other assimilation policies, the federal government began to establish residential schools across Canada. Authorities would take First Nations, Métis and Inuit children to schools far from their home communities as part of a strategy to alienate them from their families, languages, lifestyles and familiar cultural surroundings. However, it is worth noting that Indigenous Peoples always resisted this. For example, the establishment of the Shingle Point Residential School (SPRS) was through petitions by local Inuvialuit Anglican evangelists who advocated for students to be moved from St. Peter's Residential School in Hay River to a school closer to their homeland.

## Colonialism Defined

Colonialism is the attempted or actual imposition of policies, laws, mores\*, economies, cultures or systems and institutions put in place by settler governments (and some churches) to support and continue the occupation of Indigenous territories, the subjugation of Indigenous Nations and the resulting internalized and externalized thought patterns that support this occupation and subjugation. Colonialism is the ideology advocating colonization. Colonization generally refers to the process by which Europeans invaded and occupied Indigenous national territories.

*\* Mores: the fixed morally binding customs of a particular group – Merriam-Webster.*

**Source:** National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls, 2017.



**Authorities would forcibly take First Nations, Métis, and Inuit children to boarding schools far from their communities. The boat belonged to Rev. Umoak. Photo credit: The General Synod Archives, Anglican Church of Canada.**

*P7538-858 - The General Synod Archives, Anglican Church of Canada*

“In all that time I was there I never had a chance to talk to my sisters. You know, we’re segregated even in church. The girls had one side, the boys one side. You went to school, same thing. You never had a chance to, only at Christmas and Easter feasts I think is the only time that we sat in the same dining room to eat together. And that’s the only time, you know, my sisters and I had a chance to talk together.” – Peter Ross. *The Survivors Speak*,

*Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, 2015, page 92.*



***P9901-570-S1 - Mrs. Butler standing by 2 rows of students standing outside. Shingle Point Eskimo Residential School - The General Synod Archives, Anglican Church of Canada***

# **The Residential School System and its Legacy**



## GOVERNMENT POLICIES AND LAWS

From the early 1830s to 1996, over 150,000 First Nations, Inuit and Métis children as young as four years old, were forced to attend residential schools as part of the federal government's attempt to assimilate Indigenous Peoples into the settler culture. Residential schools were boarding schools financed by the federal government, but run by several Christian religious institutions until 1969, when the federal government took over the operation of the system.

Federal policies on the use of education as a tool for assimilation began in the 1840s and continued into the 20th century. Laws were passed with the specific intention of separating life. The Indian Act was amended in 1920 to make attendance at residential schools mandatory by law for Indigenous children aged 7-15 years old. Failure to send children to residential school often resulted in the punishment of parents, including imprisonment. This continued until the 1970s, when the federal government began transferring education management to Indigenous Peoples as a result of negotiations with the National Indian Brotherhood. The last federal residential school was closed in 1996.

**Source:** *Living Well Together: Government policies and laws on the residential school system.*

## THE SYSTEM'S DEVASTATING AND FAR-REACHING IMPACTS ON GENERATIONS

The impacts and injustices of the residential school system have been profound and are ongoing. The system has disrupted and scarred the lives of former students, their partners, their children, their grandchildren, their extended families and their communities. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC), in its final report, *What We Have Learned: The Principles of Reconciliation*, describes the legacy of the residential school system in the context of “more than a century of cultural genocide” that has contributed to the:

- intense racism some people harbour against Indigenous Peoples
- systematic and many other forms of discrimination Indigenous Peoples face in Canada
- disproportionate apprehension of Indigenous children by child-welfare agencies
- disproportionate imprisonment and victimization of Indigenous Peoples
- significant educational, income, health and social disparities between Indigenous Peoples and other Canadians

The impacts of the residential school system are profound and have affected generations of Indigenous Peoples. These impacts include, but are not limited to:

- the virtual extinction of many Indigenous languages
- loss of identity, culture and spirituality
- loss of positive parenting role models, skills and nurturing experiences
- difficulties being loving nurturing parents
- the development of addictions as a coping mechanism
- the perpetuation of cycles of abuse within families and across generations

It is important to note that not all former students and survivors of residential schools have been impacted by their experiences in the same way. People's experiences in schools varied across the country, between First Nations, Inuit and Métis Peoples, and between schools. While some former students have spoken positively about their experiences, the majority have not.

## INTERGENERATIONAL TRAUMA

Adaptation of abusive behaviours learned from residential schools by some students has also occurred, resulting in intergenerational trauma impacts within their families. Intergenerational trauma is the cycle of abuse and trauma that spreads from one generation to the next. Research on intergenerational transmission of trauma makes it clear that individuals who have suffered the effects of traumatic stress pass it on to those close to them and generate vulnerability in their children. Their children, in turn, experience their own trauma.

**Source:** *Living Well Together: The system's devastating and far-reaching impacts on generations of students, families and communities.*

# The Impact of Residential Schools in the North

## INTRODUCTION

The residential and day school systems were late in coming to the North. Their impact here has been significant and continues to be present. According to the 2001 Statistics Canada Aboriginal Peoples Survey, over 50% of Indigenous Peoples 45 years of age and older in the Northwest Territories and the Yukon attended a residential school.

## INTERGENERATIONAL IMPACTS

The residential school system has had intergenerational impacts that many families and communities continue to grapple with today. Examples of these impacts include:

- the loss of many Indigenous languages
- loss of identity, culture and spirituality
- loss of positive parenting role models, skills and nurturing experiences
- the development of addictions as a coping mechanism

Indigenous Peoples have faced centuries of colonial policies and practices deliberately intended to assimilate them into western culture by undermining and destroying Indigenous values, cultural practices, languages and ways of life. The oppression and injustices perpetrated against Indigenous Peoples have resulted in a severe collective trauma compounded by the trauma of the residential school system. This trauma is intergenerational, meaning that it is passed from generation to generation. Research on the intergenerational transmission of trauma clearly shows that individuals who have suffered the effects of traumatic stress pass it on to those close to them and generate vulnerability in their children.



*“Youth may not know what the intergenerational impacts of colonization are, but too many know how these impacts feel. Knowledge is power. We can help empower our youth by teaching them about the past, teaching them about our culture and our language, and sharing our Traditional Knowledge with them. This will help them feel a sense of belonging and have a stronger identity. We also need to create healthy alternatives for youth, like on-the-land programs – give them a chance to get out to a whaling camp, or to learn traditional Inuvialuit games. We are resilient strong people who have survived centuries of disruptions to our ways of life and culture. Our youth need to know this, so they can feel empowered.” – Adapted from comments from Community Contribution Sessions*

Intergenerational trauma is cumulative. Trauma of the past is compounded by the continuing trauma resulting from contemporary forms of injustice and oppression. Over time, this trauma becomes internalized, resulting in a sense of shame and hopelessness for many. The effects of intergenerational trauma are not limited to individuals and families. They can also reverberate through communities and entire populations. Intergenerational trauma has resulted in a legacy of physical, psychological and economic disparities in the North that persist across generations.

**Source:** *Living Well Together: The impact of residential schools in the North (“Living Well Together”)*

# Key Timelines

1955

### **Residential Schools and Hostels in the North**

The federal government begins operating residential schools and hostels for Inuit students in the North.

1970

### **Northern Schools Change Authority**

Northern schools come under the authority of the Government of Northwest Territories.

### **New Indigenous Organizations Emerge**

Indigenous social and political organizations emerge throughout the NWT beginning in 1970.

**1970:** The Indian Brotherhood of the NWT is incorporated. Its mandate: protect the rights and interests of Treaty 9 and 11 Dene.  
(Present-day Dene Nation)

**1970:** Committee for the Original People's Entitlement (COPE) is formed. COPE goes on to sign an AIP for its land claim settlement in the Western Arctic.  
(Present day Inuvialuit Regional Corporation)

**1972:** The Métis and Non-Status Native Association of the NWT is incorporated.

## 1982

### Rights of Indigenous Peoples Affirmed

The Constitution Act is amended and now recognizes and affirms the rights of “Indian, Inuit, and Métis peoples of Canada.”

## 1984

### Inuvialuit Final Agreement Ratified

The Inuvialuit are the first Indigenous peoples in the North to successfully ratify land claim agreement.

The Inuvialuit Regional Corporation is formed to manage the settlement outlined in the agreement.

## 1986-1994

### Churches Issue Formal Apologies

The United Church, the Catholic Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate, the Anglican Church and the Presbyterian Church issue formal apologies for their participation in the residential school system.



*P75-103-S1 - Three priests and three Inuit catechists. Includes the Rev. Thomas Umaok, the Rev. Sherman Shepherd, the Rev. George Nicholson - The General Synod Archives, Anglican Church of Canada*



## 1990s

### School Sexual Abuse Disclosed

Many students who lived at Grollier Hall, Inuvik (attended Sir Alexander Mackenzie School) and Turquetil Hall in Chesterfield Inlet (attended Sir Joseph Bernier School) disclose sexual abuse. Several supervisors are convicted.

## 1991

### Phil Fontaine Speaks About Abuse

Phil Fontaine, later the National Chief of the Assembly of First Nations (AFN), speaks publicly about the abuse he suffered at residential school.

## 1996

### Public Inquiry Called For

The *Final Report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples* is released. It calls for a public inquiry into the effects of residential schools upon generations of Indigenous people.



Students in Akaitcho Hall dorm room, Yellowknife, 1983. NWT Archives/©GNWT DPW/G-1995-001-1605

## 1996

### Last Federal School Closes

The last federally-run residential school — the Gordon Indian Residential school in Saskatchewan acloses. In the same year, Grollier Hall, the Catholic student residence in Inuvik, was finally closed by the territorial government.

## 1998

### Early Statements on Reconciliation

*Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples' Final Report* leads the federal government to issue a statement of reconciliation, an expression of regret for Canada's history of suppressing the cultures, languages and identity of Indigenous Peoples.

The federal government also issues, *Gathering Strength: Canada's Aboriginal Action Plan*, which is "designed to renew the relationship with the Aboriginal people of Canada." One recommendation is to establish The Aboriginal Healing Foundation.

2006

### **Indian Residential School Settlement Agreement Signed**

The federal government, legal representatives of former students, the Assembly of First Nations, Inuit representatives and the churches sign the *Indian Residential School of Settlement Agreement* (IRSSA).

2008

### **The Truth and Reconciliation Commission**

As part of the IRSSA, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) is launched and hosts events across the country to listen to Canadians who want to share their stories related to residential school.

### **Prime Minister Apologizes**

Prime Minister Steven Harper apologizes to First Nations, Inuit and Métis for the residential school system.



## 2011

### **TRC Hearing Held in Inuvik**

Upwards of 1,000 former students and Survivors of residential school and others affected by the schools attend the TRC hearing in Inuvik. This the TRC's second national event.

Minister Jackson Lafferty announces that the GNWT will make learning about the history and legacy of residential schools mandatory for students to graduate from high school.

### **TRC Inuit Sub-Commission Begins Work**

The Inuit Sub-Commission, headquartered in Yellowknife, begins carrying out the work of the TRC in Northern Canada. The Sub-Commission was formed to ensure that Inuit survivors of residential schools were fully included in the national truth-telling and reconciliation process.



## 2019

### **MMIWG Final Report Released**

The National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls (MMIWG) releases its final report.

The report concludes that colonial structures and policies are persistent in Canada and constitute a root cause of violence against Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQIA people.

It also concludes that this violence constitutes a race-based genocide of First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples.

### **Federal Apology for Federal Indian Day Schools Issued**

The Federal Court approves a nation-wide class settlement to compensate former students and survivors who suffered harms while attending Federal Indian Day School and Federal Day Schools.

The settlement also includes a \$200 million Legacy Fund to support commemoration projects, health and wellness projects and language and culture initiatives.



## 2019

### **Legislative Assemblies Commit to TRC Calls to Action**

The 19th Legislative Assembly of the GNWT has made as a priority the meeting of the Truth and Reconciliation Call to Action 43 that calls upon all levels of government in Canada to fully adopt and implement the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples as the framework for reconciliation.

This continues the commitments of the 17th and 18th Assemblies to support the Calls to Action that fall within the jurisdiction of the territorial government.

**Source:** *Living Well Together*. (“*Living Well Together*”)

# The Last Residential School to Close in Canada

According to Indigenous Corporate Training Inc.'s Working Effectively With Indigenous Peoples® blog post for September 19, 2024 there is evidence that the last residential school in Canada was closed in 1997 and not 1996 as previously documented. Below is an extract from the news article:

*“Many educational programs and documents that recount the history of Indian Residential Schools in Canada will state that 1996 was the year that Canada’s last residential school (Gordon Reserve Indian Residential School, Saskatchewan) closed, which isn’t accurate for a few reasons.*

*The last Indian Residential School in Canada to close was Kivalliq Hall in Rankin Inlet in what is now known as the territory of Nunavut.*



*Kivalliq Hall in Rankin Inlet.  
Photo: NWT Archives/(copy-right symbol)GNWT. Dept  
PW&S/G-1995-0011:5917*

*Kivalliq Hall closed in 1997, which is an important detail to note when recounting and learning about Indigenous history. Here we’ll explore some of the factors that explain why previous accounts of the last residential school in Canada closing in 1996 aren’t accurate due to the Indian Residential Schools Settlement Agreement or IRSSA.*



## IRSSA-Recognized Schools

*With the establishment of the IRSSA also came qualifiers to determine what schools within Canada were residential schools and who was eligible to apply for funds as survivors. Generally, Federal Indian Day Schools or Federal Day Schools that were funded, managed, and controlled were those that qualified. Since the establishment of the IRSSA, there have been requests for 1,531 distinct institutions to be added to the IRSSA, but until 2019, the number of IRSSA-recognized institutions was only 139.*

*The application to apply for the Common Experience Payment (CEP) closed in 2012, but in 2019, it was re-opened when former students won a court battle to have Kivalliq Hall recognized under the IRSSA. It's estimated that 225 students lived in this residential school between 1986 and 1997 when it officially closed. The addition of Kivalliq Hall brought the number of IRSSA-recognized institutions to 140."*

**Source:** *The Significance of IRSSA-Recognized Schools in Indigenous Relations* (ictinc.ca) ("The Significance of IRSSA-Recognized Schools")

## COPE NEGOTIATES LAND CLAIM AGREEMENT

On January 28, 1970, in response to increasing oil and gas exploration and other pressures, a group of Inuvialuit elders and youth came together to form the Committee for Original People's Entitlement (COPE) to represent the interests of the Indigenous people of the western Arctic. COPE feared that unless action was taken, they would have no input in resource development. They were also concerned that most of the benefits from any development would flow south, with Indigenous people benefitting little. COPE identified its main objective was to provide a united voice for all original people of the Northwest Territories and to work towards the establishment and realization of Indigenous people's rights. Within a short period, COPE accomplished many things. It organized the first conference of Arctic native people, helped start the Northern Games, produced weekly radio shows in aboriginal languages, helped preserve the history and heritage of aboriginal people by interviewing and taping elders, supported aboriginal business ventures and lobbied for adequate housing for low-income families.



*L. to R.: Late Robert Kuptana, Sam Raddi, Les Carpenter signing the Inuvialuit Final Agreement in Inuvik on June 5, 1984.*

But, first and foremost, COPE represented the Inuvialuit in negotiating a land claim agreement with the federal government. Negotiations between COPE and the Government of Canada began in 1974 and lasted over the course of 10 years. But the collective voice of the Inuvialuit prevailed and on June 5, 1984, the two sides signed the Inuvialuit Final Agreement (IFA). It was the first comprehensive land claim agreement signed north of the 60th parallel and only the second in Canada at that time. COPE was soon dissolved, and Inuvialuit Regional Corporation (IRC) was established with the overall responsibility of managing the affairs of the settlement as outlined in the IFA. Its mandate has always been to continually improve the economic, social and cultural well-being of the Inuvialuit through implementation of the IFA and by all other available means. Learn more about the IFA: [irc.inuvialuit.com/about-irc/inuvialuit-final-agreement/](http://irc.inuvialuit.com/about-irc/inuvialuit-final-agreement/)



*L. to R.: Late Bertha Ruben, living Renie Arey, late Les Carpenter signing the Inuvialuit Final Agreement in Inuvik on June 5, 1984.*

# The Way Forward - Healing and Reconciliation



## INDIAN RESIDENTIAL SCHOOL SETTLEMENT AGREEMENT (IRSSA)

The largest class action settlement in Canadian history to date, the Indian Residential Schools Settlement Agreement (IRSSA) recognized the damage inflicted on Indigenous Peoples by residential schools in Canada and established a multi-billion-dollar fund to help former students in their recovery. Indigenous communities, governments and church organizations have long struggled to heal the wounds inflicted by the residential school system. From the 1980s on, former students launched legal campaigns to push the government and churches to recognize the abuses of the system, and to provide some compensation.

In 1998, the federal government issued a Statement of Reconciliation that acknowledged the abuses suffered by former students and established the multi-million-dollar Aboriginal Healing Foundation. The Alternative Dispute Resolution process was launched in 2003, providing an out-of-court mechanism for determining compensation and offering psychological support.

On May 8, 2006, with the consensus of residential school survivors, Assembly of First Nations, Inuit representatives, United, Presbyterian, Anglican and Catholic churches of Canada and federal government, the more comprehensive IRSSA was approved by the courts and it came into effect on September 19, 2007. Signatories agreed to the five key components of the IRSSA:

**1. Common Experience Payment (CEP)**

A total of \$1.9 billion was set aside for the direct benefit of former Indian residential school students. For those still alive as of May 30, 2005 (the day the negotiations were initiated) and upon application, a Common Experience Payment was paid to every eligible former student who resided at a recognized Indian residential school. This includes First Nations, Métis and Inuit former students. The deadline to apply for the CEP was September 19, 2011.

**2. Independent Assessment Process (IAP)**

The Independent Assessment Process (IAP) assisted former students to settle their claims for abuses suffered at Indian residential schools. The IAP compensated former students for sexual abuse, serious physical abuse and certain other wrongful acts that caused serious psychological consequences for the individual. This compensation was available in addition to the Common Experience Payment. IAP applications closed in 2012.

**3. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC)**

The TRC provided those directly or indirectly affected by the legacy of the [Indian Residential Schools](#) system with an opportunity to share their stories and experiences and to facilitate reconciliation among former students, their families, their communities and all Canadians. The TRC had several mandates including: to educate Canadians about the deplorable conditions of the residential school system, to document experiences of the survivors and their families and to create a process of reconciliation that called for renewed relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Peoples based on mutual respect and understanding. (*Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada, 2018*).

Between 2007 and 2015, the Government of Canada provided about \$72 million to support the TRC's work and the commissioners spent six years travelling to all parts of Canada and heard from more than 6,500 witnesses. They also hosted seven national events across Canada to engage the Canadian public, educate people about the history and legacy of the residential school system and share and honour the experiences of former students and their families. The TRC further created a historical record of the residential school system. As part of this process, the Government of Canada provided over 5 million records to the TRC. The National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation at the University of Manitoba now houses the documents collected by the TRC.

## TRC COMES TO THE INUVIALUIT SETTLEMENT REGION

From June 27 to July 1, 2011 more that 3,000 people gathered in Inuvik, NT for the second national event organized by the TRC. Former students of residential schools saw this as a chance to begin the difficult work of healing by telling their stories in the presence of church and government leaders, as well as former staff of the schools.

This event represented the second of seven such gatherings to be hosted by the TRC as part of it's five-year mandate. The proceedings included an opening ceremony with drum dancing, prayers, speeches and the lighting of the quilliq (oil lamp). This was followed by a circle of reconciliation where former students shared their stories, either in a group or privately and these were, in turn, documented.

## THE FINAL REPORT

In June 2015, the TRC held a closing event in Ottawa and presented the executive summary of the findings contained in its multi-volume final report, including 94 “calls to action” (or recommendations) to further reconciliation between Canadians and Indigenous Peoples. In December 2015, the TRC released its six-volume final report.

All Canadians are encouraged to read the TRC reports and ‘Where are the Children Buried’ on the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation website to learn more about the terrible history of the Indian residential school system and its tragic legacy.

**Source:** [rcaanc-cirnac.gc.ca/eng/1450124405592/1529106060525#chp1](http://rcaanc-cirnac.gc.ca/eng/1450124405592/1529106060525#chp1)  
(“Truth and Reconciliation Commission”)

### 4. Commemoration

A \$20 million fund was established to commemorate the legacy of Indian residential schools. Commemoration is about honouring, educating, remembering, memorializing and paying tribute to former students of residential schools, their families and the larger Indigenous community. It also acknowledges their experiences and the systemic impacts of the Indian residential school system. The government provides funding to facilitate regional and national commemoration initiatives that address the residential school experience and supports opportunities to share the initiative with family and community.

Each year, September 30 marks National Truth and Reconciliation Day (Orange Shirt Day) and is set aside to honour the children who never returned home and survivors of residential schools, as well as their families and communities. Public commemoration of the tragic and painful history and ongoing impacts of residential schools

is a vital component of the reconciliation process. This federal statutory holiday was created through [legislative amendments](#) made by Parliament.

Orange Shirt Day is a legacy of the St. Joseph Mission (SJM) Residential School (1891-1981) Commemoration Project and Reunion events that took place in Williams Lake, BC, Canada, in May 2013. This project was the vision of Esketemc (Alkali Lake) Chief Fred Robbins, who is a former student himself. It brought together former students and their families from the Secwepemc, Tsilhqot'in, Southern Dakelh and St'at'imc Nations along with the Cariboo Regional District, the mayors and municipalities, school districts and civic organizations in the Cariboo Region.

The events were designed to commemorate the residential school experience, to witness and honour the healing journey of the survivors and their families, and to commit to the ongoing process of reconciliation. Chief Justice Murray Sinclair challenged all of the participants to keep the reconciliation process alive, as a result of the realization that all former students had similar stories.

**Source:** *Government of Canada, National Day for Truth and Reconciliation website [canada.ca/en/canadian-heritage/campaigns/national-day-truth-reconciliation.html](https://canada.ca/en/canadian-heritage/campaigns/national-day-truth-reconciliation.html) ("National Day for Truth and Reconciliation")*

As spokesperson for the reunion group leading up to the events, former student Phyllis (Jack) Webstad told [her story](#) of her first day at residential school when her shiny new orange shirt, bought by her grandmother, was taken from her as a six-year old girl.



The annual Orange Shirt Day on September 30 opens the door to global conversation on all aspects of residential schools. It is an opportunity to create meaningful discussion about the effects of residential schools and the legacy they have left behind — a discussion all Canadians can tune into and create bridges with each other for reconciliation. It is a day for survivors to reaffirm that they matter, and so does everyone who has been affected. Every Child Matters, even if they are now adults, from now on.

**Source:** *Orange Shirt Society website [orangeshirtday.org/orange-shirt-day](https://www.orangeshirtday.org/orange-shirt-day) (“The Story of Orange Shirt Day”)*

## 5. Health and Healing Services

In 1998, the Aboriginal Healing Foundation was established with a 10-year mandate to manage a \$350 million fund that would support community-led healing initiatives addressing the legacy of abuse in the residential school system. In 2007, a further \$125 million was allocated for the Aboriginal Healing Foundation to continue supporting healing programs and initiatives for an additional five years. The church entities involved in the administration of Indian Residential Schools contributed up to a total of \$100 million in money and in-kind services toward healing initiatives.

Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada continues to support former students in crisis by funding the National Indian Residential School crisis line, a national, 24-hour toll-free support service (1-866-925-4419) operated by trained crisis counsellors, many of whom are Indigenous.

In addition, the [Indian Residential Schools Resolution Health Support Program](#) (IRS RHSP) provides mental health and emotional support services directly to former students and their families as they participate in the different components of the IRSSA. The services include emotional support, cultural support, professional counselling and assistance with transportation as needed.

## Support for Inuvialuit

The IRC RHSP team, some members of which were at the 2011 TRC event in Inuvik, continues to this day with a staff of resolution health support and cultural support workers. This dedicated team has supported survivors over the years who have spoken publicly about their trauma while attending the residential schools in the ISR and the impact it had on their families and communities. They continue to work with elders to find ways to use language, culture and traditional values and skills to heal our people for generations to come.

Cultural support workers located in each community are the eyes and ears in the Inuvialuit Settlement Region and make referrals to the RHSP team. The RHSP team offers workshops in communities throughout the ISR and offer emotional support to survivors, as well as referrals to counsellors. They attend independent assessment process hearings and assist with filling out paperwork for class action lawsuits, including the Residential School Class Action that began in 2008. Hundreds of claims have been completed to date.

# Voices of the Indigenous Peoples through Calls to Action

## TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION COMMISSION (TRC) CALLS TO ACTION

The residential schools are now closed, and Indigenous people are still dealing with the impacts of that experience. In 2015, the TRC published its final report detailing the experiences and impacts of the residential school system, creating a historical record of its legacy and consequences. One outcome of the report was a document detailing 94 calls to action across a wide range of areas including child welfare, education, health, justice, language and culture.

The calls to action also include recommendations aimed at the Canadian government, specifically to adopt and implement the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People, develop a Royal Proclamation of Reconciliation, establish a National Council for Reconciliation, and provide professional development and training for public servants. Other recommendations are aimed at the Church, education systems, legal systems, youth programs, museums and archives, missing children and burial information, commemorations, media, sports and business as well as education for newcomers to Canada. (*Truth and Reconciliation Commission: Calls to Action*). Below we share calls that relate to residential schools.

## CHILD WELLBEING

### Call to Action #1

***We call upon the federal, provincial, territorial, and Aboriginal governments to commit to reducing the number of Aboriginal children in care by:***

- i. Providing adequate resources to enable Aboriginal communities and child-welfare organizations to keep Aboriginal families together where it is safe to do so, and to keep children in culturally appropriate environments, regardless of where they reside.



*Inuit children participating in community cultural events in the Inuvialuit Settlement Region. Photo credit: IRC*



- ii. Ensuring that social workers and others who conduct child-welfare investigations are properly educated and trained about the history and impacts of residential schools.
- iii. Ensuring that social workers and others who conduct child-welfare investigations are properly educated and trained about the potential for Aboriginal communities and families to provide more appropriate solutions to family healing.
- iv. Requiring that all child-welfare decision makers consider the impact of the residential school experience on children and their caregivers.

An act respecting First Nations, Inuit and Métis children, youth and families was co-developed with Indigenous partners with an expected result of reducing the number of Indigenous children in care and reforming child and family services.

The act:

- came into force on January 1, 2020
- affirms the rights of First Nations, Inuit and Métis to exercise jurisdiction over child and family services
- establishes national principles, such as the best interests of the child, cultural continuity and substantive equality

Under the act, the order of priority for the placement of an Indigenous child prioritizes the family and community and aims to shift the programming focus to prevention and early intervention to help Indigenous children stay with their families and communities.

The principles and minimum standards established under the act are designed to benefit all Indigenous children and families regardless of whether Indigenous communities or groups decide to exercise jurisdiction over child and family services under the act.

The act sets out a unique, holistic, community-driven process for Section 35 rights-holders and Indigenous governing bodies to develop their visions and models by, among other measures, committing to fiscal arrangements that are sustainable, needs-based and consistent with the principle of substantive equality, thereby ensuring resources to enable communities to keep families together where it is safe to do so, and to keep children in culturally appropriate environments, regardless of where they reside.

Finally, the act provides an opportunity for open and transparent dialogue that offers an entire process based on cooperation and collaboration for successful outcomes that will break the cycles of intergenerational trauma and restore and support wellbeing to children and families.

As well, in support of this call to action, the Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC) has collaborated to develop the Canadian Child Welfare Information System (CCWIS), a national population-based information system that uses routinely collected data about those involved with child welfare. CCWIS (which now includes the Pan-Territorial Data Project) provides timely and relevant national data to inform a public health approach to child welfare and child and family wellbeing.

**Source:** [rcaanc-cirnac.gc.ca/eng/1524494379788/1557513026413](https://rcaanc-cirnac.gc.ca/eng/1524494379788/1557513026413) (“Child Welfare”)

## Call to Action #4

***We call upon the federal government to enact Aboriginal child-welfare legislation that establishes national standards for Aboriginal child apprehension and custody cases and includes principles that:***

- i. Affirm the right of Aboriginal governments to establish and maintain their own child-welfare agencies.

- ii. Require all child-welfare agencies and courts to take the residential school legacy into account in their decision making.
- iii. Establish, as an important priority, a requirement that placements of Aboriginal children into temporary and permanent care be culturally appropriate.

**Source:** [rcaanc-cirnac.gc.ca/eng/1524494379788/1557513026413](https://rcaanc-cirnac.gc.ca/eng/1524494379788/1557513026413) (“Child Welfare”)

## **The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UN Declaration Act)**

The UN Declaration Act provides a framework for reconciliation, healing and peace, as well as harmonious and cooperative relations based on the principles of justice, democracy, respect for human rights, non-discrimination and good faith. Below we share the Calls to Action that relate to residential schools.

### **Call to Action #43**

***We call upon federal, provincial, territorial and municipal governments to fully adopt and implement the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples as the framework for reconciliation.***

### **BACKGROUND**

In 2016, the Government of Canada endorsed the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UN Declaration) without qualification and committed to its full and effective implementation. This endorsement confirmed Canada’s commitment to a renewed, nation-to-nation, Inuit-Crown, and government-to-government relationship with Indigenous Peoples — a relationship based on recognition of rights, respect, co-operation and partnership. On June 21, 2021, the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act (UN Declaration Act) received Royal Assent and immediately came into force. This legislation advances the implementation of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples as a key step in renewing the Government of Canada’s relationship with Indigenous peoples.

The purpose of this Act is to affirm the UN Declaration as an international human rights instrument that can help interpret and apply Canadian law. It also provides a framework to advance implementation of the UN Declaration at the federal level. This Act requires the Government of Canada, in consultation and cooperation with Indigenous Peoples, to:

- take all measures necessary to ensure federal laws are consistent with the UN Declaration
- prepare and implement an action plan to achieve the UN Declaration's objectives
- table an annual report on progress to align the laws of Canada and the action plan

Following the Royal Assent of the UN Declaration Act, Justice Canada launched a broad and inclusive consultation and cooperation process with Indigenous Peoples to support the development of the action plan, including the identification of measures to ensure consistency of federal laws with the UN Declaration.

## RECENT BUDGET INVESTMENTS

Budget 2021 provided \$31.5 million over 2 years, starting in 2021 to 2022, to support the co-development of an Action Plan with Indigenous partners to implement the UN Declaration Act, including the development of the Action Plan.

Budget 2022 provided \$37 million in funding over 5 years to support the core capacity of Indigenous governments, organizations, and groups to continue to contribute meaningfully to the implementation of the UN Declaration Act and the associated Action Plan.

## RECENT PROGRESS

On June 21, 2023, the Government of Canada released the UN Declaration Act Action Plan. This evergreen Action Plan, which includes 181 measures to be led by over 25 federal departments and agencies, provides a roadmap of actions Canada will take with Indigenous Peoples to implement the rights and principles set out in the UN Declaration and to further advance reconciliation in a tangible way. On July 19, 2023, the [Second Annual Progress Report on the Implementation of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act](#) was tabled in Parliament.

## NEXT STEPS

The 181 measures in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act Action Plan outline the work that Canada will undertake with Indigenous Peoples over the next five years to advance implementation of the UN Declaration. Over 25 federal departments and agencies will lead on specific measures falling under their respective mandates and will work closely with Indigenous partners to develop implementation plans, including timelines and metrics.

While the UN Declaration Act imposes obligations only on the federal government and the Action Plan is federal in scope, several Action Plan measures refer specifically to working with provinces and territories, along with Indigenous partners, while others would benefit from federal, provincial and territorial collaboration to advance implementation. Justice Canada and other departments leading on these measures will engage provincial and territorial partners to ensure successful implementation. Additionally, Justice Canada is moving to establish an Action Plan Advisory Committee, as per the action plan shared as priority 22.



Funding announced in the federal budget 2022 to support Indigenous capacity for sustained contributions to the UN Declaration Act and the Action Plan implementation will be equitably allocated to Indigenous governments, organizations and groups, through the [Indigenous Partnership Fund](#).

**Source:** [rcaanc-cirnac.gc.ca/eng/1524502914394/1557512757504](https://rcaanc-cirnac.gc.ca/eng/1524502914394/1557512757504)  
("Canadian Governments")

## Call to Action #44

***We call upon the Government of Canada to develop a national action plan, strategies, and other concrete measures to achieve the goals of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.***

### BACKGROUND

The [United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act](#) (the UN Declaration Act) requires the Government of Canada, in consultation and cooperation with Indigenous Peoples, to:

- take all measures necessary to ensure federal laws are consistent with the [United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples](#) (the UN Declaration)
- prepare and implement an action plan to achieve the UN Declaration's objectives
- table an annual report on progress to align the laws of Canada and the action plan

In this way, the UN Declaration Act responds to Calls to Action 43 and 44 at the federal level.

On June 21, 2023, the Government of Canada released the [United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act Action Plan](#), in consultation and cooperation with First Nations, Inuit and Métis.

The Action Plan contains 181 measures, put forward by First Nations, Inuit and Métis, that will guide steps needed to effectively implement the UN Declaration in Canada. It provides a roadmap of concrete actions Canada will take, in partnership with Indigenous Peoples, to implement the principles and rights set out in the UN Declaration and advance lasting reconciliation in a tangible way.

Justice Canada and lead federal departments and agencies will continue working with Indigenous partners to prioritize and sequence the implementation of the 181 measures in the Action Plan. The implementation of these measures will contribute to achieving the objectives of the UN Declaration and advancing transformative change. Justice Canada will also work to ensure transparent and accountable reporting on progress.

## BACKGROUND AND CURRENT STATUS

After the UN Declaration received Royal Assent, Justice Canada launched a broad and inclusive consultation and cooperation process to support the development of an action plan, the identification of measures to ensure consistency of federal laws with the UN Declaration and the development of annual reports on progress.

The first annual progress report was tabled in Parliament in June 2022, and the [second annual progress report on the implementation of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act](#) was tabled in July 2023.

## RECENT PROGRESS

In December 2021, Justice Canada launched a two-phased broad, inclusive and distinctions-based consultation and cooperation process with Indigenous Peoples to better understand their priorities to shape the action plan and to begin to identify potential measures for aligning federal laws with the UN Declaration. As a result of this in-depth consultation and cooperation process, over 300 bilateral meetings, thematic sessions and roundtables were held, and over 120 written submissions proposing over 3000 Action Plan measures were received.

There were two rounds of UNDRIP consultation visits in the Inuvialuit Settlement Region (ISR). The first round, which was to provide information about UNDRIP were conducted in all six ISR communities in 2022. The second round was to consist of open houses held in each of the six communities as an opportunity for residents to pose questions and provide feedback. Due to staffing shortages and poor weather only two visits were conducted in - Tuktoyaktuk and Ulukhaktok - in 2023.

Preparation of the 2023 annual progress report prioritized expanding consultation with Indigenous partners in the development of its content. Seventeen Indigenous partners contributed to the report, as well as 36 government departments and agencies. In addition, 33 Indigenous partners informed the development of the annual reporting process more broadly by contributing over 200 specific suggestions related to Section 7 of the UN Declaration Act.

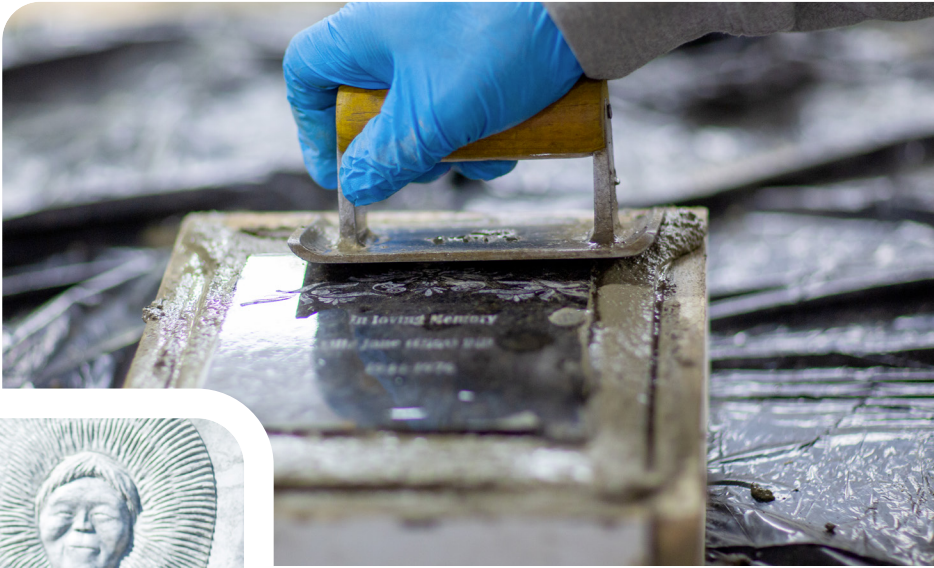
**Source:** [rcaanc-cirnac.gc.ca/eng/1524502914394/1557512757504](https://rcaanc-cirnac.gc.ca/eng/1524502914394/1557512757504)  
("Canadian Governments")

## Call to Action #79

***We call upon the federal government, in collaboration with survivors, Aboriginal organizations, and the arts community, to develop a reconciliation framework for Canadian heritage and commemoration. This would include, but not be limited to:***

- i. Amending the Historic Sites and Monuments Act to include First Nations, Inuit and Métis representation on the Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada and its Secretariat.
- ii. Revising the policies, criteria and practices of the National Program of Historical Commemoration to integrate Indigenous history, heritage values and memory practices into Canada's national heritage and history.
- iii. Developing and implementing a national heritage plan and strategy for commemorating residential school sites, the history and legacy of residential schools and the contributions of Aboriginal Peoples to Canada's history.

**Source:** [rcaanc-cirnac.gc.ca/eng/1524505403680/1557513866487](https://rcaanc-cirnac.gc.ca/eng/1524505403680/1557513866487)  
("Commemoration")



*In 2022, Inuvialuit artists participate in a training course to design and construct grave markers. The workshop was sponsored by the IRC'S Indigenous Skills and Employment Training Program in Inuvik.*

*Tuktoyaktuk — Child at carving unveiling. Face depicts Persis Gruben, a former student at Shingle Point residential school.*

## Call to Action #81

***We call upon the federal government, in collaboration with survivors and their organizations, and other parties to the Settlement Agreement, to commission and install a publicly accessible, highly visible, Residential Schools National Monument in the city of Ottawa to honour survivors and all the children who were lost to their families and communities.***

### BACKGROUND

Canadian Heritage is the federal government lead for this Call to Action given its responsibility as lead department for national monuments in Canada's Capital Region. The project is currently at the early progress stage.



## RECENT BUDGET INVESTMENTS

In August 2021, the government announced \$20 million in new funding to build a national monument in Ottawa to honour survivors and all the children who were taken from their families and communities.

## RECENT PROGRESS

On June 20, 2023, the survivor-led steering committee announced that the Residential Schools National Monument will be installed on Parliament Hill, in Ottawa. The site selected is on the ancestral lands of the Anishinabe Algonquin Nation and was blessed by elders during a special ceremony held on the evening prior to the announcement. The site is on the west side of Parliament Hill and is highly visible in the heart of downtown Ottawa.

## NEXT STEPS

Next steps include beginning the process to select the monument's design. This will require the following steps:

- determining the appropriate procurement approach and mechanism
- establishing an Indigenous-led selection panel
- establishing a design brief that reflects the monument's vision, objectives and site conditions
- preparing the supporting technical documents for the selection process

**Source:** <https://www.rcaanc-cirnac.gc.ca/eng/1524505403680/1557513866487> ("Commemoration")

# Voices of the Indigenous Peoples through Calls to Justice

In 2016, the federal government established the 231 Calls for Justice formulated by the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls (MMIWG). The National Inquiry issued its final report on June 3, 2019. The calls are aimed at a wide range of actors including governments, police services, social service providers, institutions, industries and all Canadians. Testimony shared by Inuit witnesses, experts and elders, and submissions by Inuit representative organizations, along with existing reports and research, demonstrate that Inuit have unique and distinct experiences of colonial oppression and violence. Call for Justice 16.46 is one of the 231 Inuit-specific recommendations from the final report.

### Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls (MMIWG)

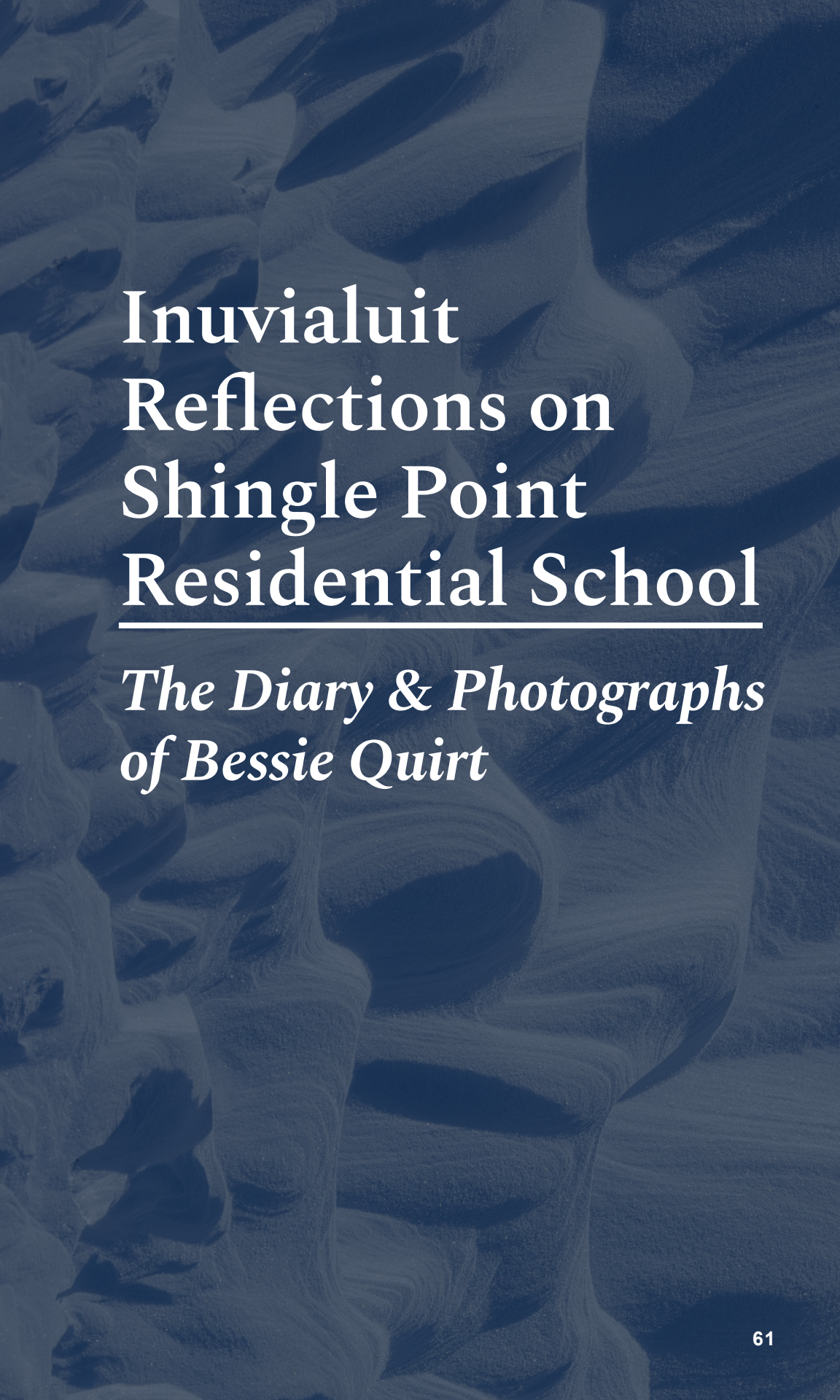
Also known as Red Dress Day, May 5 honours the thousands of missing and murdered Indigenous women, girls, 2 spirit, and gender diverse people in Canada by encouraging learning and building awareness to end violence against these groups. “Red Dress Day” was coined by Métis artist, Jaime Black as “an aesthetic response to this critical national issue.”

### Call for Justice #16.46

Many people continue to look for information and the final resting place of their lost loved ones. The federal government, in partnership with Inuit, has established the Nanilavut project. We recognize the significance of the project as an important step in healing and Inuit self-determination in the healing and reconciliation process. We call upon the federal government to support the work of the Nanilavut project on a long-term basis, with sustained funding so that it can continue to serve Inuit families as they look for answers to the questions of what happened to their loved ones. We further insist that it must provide for the option of repatriation of the remains of lost loved ones once they are located.

**Source:** [tiontario.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/MMIWG-CALLS-FOR-JUSTICE.pdf](https://www.tiontario.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/MMIWG-CALLS-FOR-JUSTICE.pdf) (“MMIWG Calls”)





# Inuvialuit Reflections on Shingle Point Residential School

*The Diary & Photographs  
of Bessie Quirt*

Excerpted archival materials on Shingle Point Residential School are reproduced with permission from the Anglican Church of Canada General Synod Archives, Toronto. Archival photo information is by number (e.g. P9901-1197).



*Western Arctic Anglican Residential Schools. Section from Anglican General Synod Archives, “The Anglican Church of Canada Indian Residential Schools” (2010). Residential schools are marked with white dots.*



*Photo No.:  
P9901-1197  
– A Group of  
Children and  
Adults August  
1929.*

“We walked then along to where our Eskimo are camping — such a crowd of them with about one hundred dogs. We played ball with some of the children, visited all the tents, and then came home with Thomas in his launch. It has been a lovely day, the sun shone so brightly this evening, and the water in the bay was so calm.”

**Source:** *Inuvialuit Reflections on Shingle Point Residential School: The Diary & Photographs of Bessie Quirt* (2023, Gruben et al.)





Photo No.: P7517-304 –  
Top row: Garrett Nutik and  
Emma Nukak; bottom from  
left: Rowena, Moses, and  
Kathleen.



Photo No.: P9901-1272 –  
Children in line for school at  
Shingle Point.

*"I couldn't help feeling thrilled as I walked over to school that morning feeling what a privilege was mine being the first teacher. Now having taught them for nine days, I am very pleased. The nine big ones are getting on so very well, and the other younger ones not so badly. It seems funny having three little ones running around talking and playing all day."*  
September 16, 1929, Quirt diary excerpt from [Inuvialuit Reflections on Shingle Point Residential School](#)



Photo No.: P9901-1507 – “My Triplets – All Between 3 and 4 Years – Emily, Mabel and Mary.”

*“My family has reached its ultimate status now — Garrett coming and taking his own girls out, made room for Mabel, so now I am the mother of a family of ten, the youngest being triplets — it’s a half hour’s fun at night getting them off to bed. Jap.Jap and Honey Bubble as we call Too-kul-u-wuk and Emily are little dears. Jap. Jap especially has such a darling smile and is so good-natured and yet full of pep. I’d love Mabel just as much if I had her all to myself and Miss S- hadn’t spoiled her so. But she knows she has to obey me now, so we don’t have so many quarrels.” September 16, 1929*

*Source: Inuvialuit Reflections on Shingle Point Residential School: The Diary & Photographs of Bessie Quirt (2023, Gruben et al.)*



Photo No.: P9901-555 – “School girls in work overalls.” Quirt’s diary and photographs, as well as Inuvialuit Reflections on Shingle Point Residential School, detail how Inuit staff and students’ labour was central to Shingle Point School’s operations and missionary survival.

# Apologies from Main Church Groups in the Inuvialuit Settlement Region

From the early 1990s onward, Canadian churches publicly apologized for their role in the residential school system. More recently, Canadian federal and provincial governments formally apologized for the development of the schools, the abuses suffered at the schools and for the negative effects caused by the schools.

## CATHOLIC CHURCH

“Canada’s Catholic bishops are fully committed to working with Indigenous Peoples and communities across the country to support healing and reconciliation, and to address the historic and ongoing suffering caused by the Catholic church’s role in the Indian Residential School (“IRS”) system. As part of this work, the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops (CCCC) is making every effort to be open and transparent about the Church’s role, as well as the steps taken on the long journey towards reconciliation.

The CCCC has worked over the past several months to clarify important issues related to the Indian Residential School Settlement Agreement (“IRSSA”) and the commitments made by Catholic Entities Party to the Indian Residential School Settlement (“CCEPIRSS”). Although the CCCC was not party to the IRSSA or CCEPIRSS, we take seriously the need to understand and recognize past failures with regards to the Catholic church’s relationship with Indigenous Peoples. This is particularly the case as Canada’s bishops undertake renewed fundraising and reconciliation efforts.

Specifically, we have spoken to Catholic entities and Indigenous leaders who were signatories to the IRSSA to better understand the agreement and the dispute between Catholic entities and the Government of Canada. We reviewed available records and sought the assistance of McDougall Gauley LLP, a Saskatchewan-based law firm, with access to the evidence that was filed with the court on the CCEPIRSS court applications. Given that CCEPIRSS is no longer operational, there were limitations in the information available to us.



Having said that, we felt it was important to share the information we have been able to access. Based on our review, it is our understanding that the Catholic entities fully met their obligations under the Agreement, however, Canada's bishops recognize the need for Catholic entities to do more to support the healing and reconciliation journey. Specifically, the agreement included settlement obligations.

- (1) Cash Payment Contributions** – \$29 million in cash payment contributions, less the aggregate amount paid by Catholic entities towards IRS claims compensation at the date of the Agreement, within a five-year period.

Specifically, Catholic entities paid a net amount of \$20,655,425 in addition to \$8,344,575 in previous payments to claimants. While the agreement expressly anticipated and permitted administrative costs; most of these costs were paid by the Catholic entities, with \$399,999 being recovered from the principal amount.

- (2) In-kind services** – \$25 million in “in-kind services” over ten years.

This obligation was fully met and exceeded by the Catholic entities as of September 2011. These services were overseen and approved by a multi-party panel with appointments from the Assembly of First Nations, Catholic entities and the Government of Canada. At the time each of these projects was deemed “valuable” by a First Nation band council, Métis Settlement, Friendship Centre or other similar Indigenous body prior to approval by the multi-party panel. While the value of these services stopped being calculated when the obligation was met, many of these projects continue to this day.”

**Source:** [cccb.ca/indigenous-peoples/indian-residential-schools-and-trc/canadas-bishops-provide-update-on-indian-residential-school-settlement-agreement/](http://cccb.ca/indigenous-peoples/indian-residential-schools-and-trc/canadas-bishops-provide-update-on-indian-residential-school-settlement-agreement/) (“Canada’s Bishops”)



## ANGLICAN CHURCH

### The Anglican Church of Canada's Apology for Residential Schools

"I accept and I confess before God and you, our failures in the residential schools. We failed you. We failed ourselves. We failed God."

On August 6, 1993, Archbishop and Primate, Michael Peers delivered an apology to the Sacred Circle (then called the National Native Convocation) in Minaki, Ontario, for the Anglican Church of Canada's [role in residential schools](#). The apology came after three days of emotional testimonies from residential school survivors, while a lengthy downpour of rain took place outside the gathering.

Some described the three days as a time enveloped in darkness—as stories of cultural loss, abuse, and the stripping away of language, spirituality, and heritage dominated the gathering. Yet after the primate's apology, clouds parted and sunlight returned. The next day, Indigenous elder, [Vi Smith responded](#) on behalf of survivors and elders at the national native convocation, in acknowledgment and acceptance of the primate's words.

### After the Apology

Today, the journey of reconciliation continues—through listening, truth-telling, repentance and healing with Indigenous Peoples, both within and beyond the Church. Reflecting on the 15th anniversary of the apology, Archbishop and Primate Fred Hiltz [acknowledged the progress](#) made since 1993. In 2019, Archbishop Hiltz furthered the commitment with "[An Apology for Spiritual Harm](#)" during the gathering of the Church's national decision-making body, General Synod. General Synod 2019 also passed a motion to memorialize the apology, and August 6 was designated as the day in the Church's liturgical calendar for [Memorializing the Apology](#), 1993.

In 2022, Archbishop of Canterbury Justin Welby’s Canadian visit to several Indigenous communities brought further reconciliation. Archbishop Justin offered [an apology](#) for the Church of England’s legacy of colonialism and the harm done to Indigenous Peoples. An excerpt:

*“For that terrible crime, sin, evil, of deliberately... building hell and putting children into it, and staffing it—I am more sorry than I could ever, ever begin to express. ... I am ashamed. I am horrified. I ask myself where does that come from, that evil? It has nothing, nothing, to do with Christ.” — Archbishop of Canterbury Justin Welby (May 1, 2022)*

**Source:** [anglican.ca/tr/apology/](http://anglican.ca/tr/apology/) (“The Anglican Church”)

## Anglican Church Recognized

On August 14, 2018, in Inuvik, Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami (ITK) and the Inuvialuit Regional Corporation (IRC) presented a series of awards recognizing the contributions and achievements of Inuvialuit. Along with the Inuvialuit Cultural Resource Centre (ICRC) and Dr. Val Marie Johnson of Saint Mary’s University, the Anglican Church General Synod Archives was a recipient of the Inuit Cultural Repatriation Award. This award recognizes individuals and organizations that have taken steps to repatriate Inuit intellectual or cultural property, or other items that hold significance for our people. ICRC, together with the Anglican Church General Synod Archives and Dr. Val Marie Johnson received the award for repatriating copies of archival materials from St. John’s Eskimo Residential School at Shingle Point, Yukon. Shingle Point is an Inuvialuit whaling and fishing site that today forms part of the Inuvialuit Settlement Area.

**Source:** [itk.ca/2018-itk-awards-presented-in-inuvik/](http://itk.ca/2018-itk-awards-presented-in-inuvik/) (“Inuit Cultural Repatriation”)



# Residential Schools Attended by Inuvialuit Students



Children from the Inuvialuit Settlement Region (ISR) communities including Aklavik, Inuvik, Paulatuk, Sachs Harbour, Tuktoyaktuk and Ulukhaktok attended 19 schools in the Northwest Territories and one in Yukon. This list does not include schools in the southern part of Canada, or other areas such as the USA where Inuvialuit students may have attended.

## Immaculate Conception

*Aklavik Roman Catholic | 1926 – 1959*

*Roman Catholic | Aklavik, Northwest Territories*

The Immaculate Conception School at Aklavik took in both Inuit and First Nations pupils. Following a request for more beds and mattresses in the early 1930s, Indian Affairs found that almost 30 children were sleeping on the floor. In 1952 the federal government opened a new integrated day school in the community, and students began living in the residence of the school while attending the day school. By the mid-1950s Canada had begun plans to move the entire community of Aklavik to Inuvik. In 1959, when new hostels opened in Inuvik, the older students from the school were transferred there.

Source: National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation. Immaculate Conception (Aklavik Roman Catholic). [nctr.ca/residential-schools/northern/immaculate-conception-aklavik-roman-catholic](https://nctr.ca/residential-schools/northern/immaculate-conception-aklavik-roman-catholic). Accessed 9 December 2024.

## Shingle Point

*St. John's | 1929 - 1936*

*Anglican | Shingle Point, Yukon*

The Shingle Point School was the first residential school created specifically for Inuit children. Because it focused on Inuit pupils, the school fell under the administration of the Department of the Interior and not Indian Affairs. Operated during the Great Depression in a remote and windswept location where shipping was expensive and unreliable, the school suffered from sometimes marginal food supplies, overcrowding and little access to medical care. In 1936 the school was closed and everything was moved to the new All Saints Anglican Residential School in Aklavik.

Source: National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation. Shingle Point (St. John's). [nctr.ca/residential-schools/northern/shingle-point-st-johns](https://nctr.ca/residential-schools/northern/shingle-point-st-johns). Accessed 9 December 2024.

## All Saints

*Aklavik Anglican | 1936 - 1959*

*Anglican | Aklavik, Northwest Territories*

In the mid-1930s, the Anglican Church closed its residential schools in Shingle Point and Hay River, transferring the students to the new All Saints School in Aklavik, NWT. Over time, as more students moved to the community to attend the day school, the residence became increasingly overcrowded. In 1959, All Saints was closed, and its students were transferred to Inuvik.

Source: National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation. All Saints (Aklavik Anglican). [nctr.ca/residential-schools/northern/all-saints-aklavik-anglican](https://nctr.ca/residential-schools/northern/all-saints-aklavik-anglican). Accessed 9 December 2024.



## Hay River

*St. Peter's | 1895 – 1937*

*Anglican | Hay River, Northwest Territories*

The boarding school at the Anglican Mission at Hay River opened in 1895 and was soon receiving government grants. A new residential school building was constructed in 1917. In 1935 negotiations were underway to amalgamate Hay River and Shingle Point schools into one new facility. All Saints Anglican school in Aklavik opened in 1936, becoming the focus of Anglican education in the region. Hay River closed in 1937 and all but local students were transferred to new facilities in Aklavik. The Hay River mission continued to operate a day school for local children in the school after this.

Source: National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation. *Hay River (All Saints)*. [nctr.ca/residential-schools/northern/hay-river-all-saints](https://nctr.ca/residential-schools/northern/hay-river-all-saints). Accessed 9 December 2024.

## Fleming Hall

*St. Matthew's Anglican Hostel | 1955 – 1976*

*Anglican | Fort McPherson, Northwest Territories*

In response to overcrowding at the All-Saints Residential School in Aklavik, the Anglican Church opened a hostel in a private home in Fort McPherson in 1951. This residence operated without government support for most of the 1950s. It was replaced in 1958 by Fleming Hall, which could house 100 students who attended Peter Warren Dease School. The Hall was transferred to the government of the Northwest Territories in 1969 and was closed in 1976.

Source: National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation. *Fleming Hall (St. Matthew's Anglican Hostel)*. [nctr.ca/residential-schools/northern/fleming-hall-st-matthews-anglican-hostel](https://nctr.ca/residential-schools/northern/fleming-hall-st-matthews-anglican-hostel). Accessed 9 December 2024.

## Grolier Hall

*Notre-Dame Residence | 1959 – 1997*

*Roman Catholic | Inuvik, Northwest Territories*

Grolier Hall was part of a federal plan to establish hostels in larger northern communities. The program was unpopular from the start. In 1959 the Winnipeg Free Press quoted a former NWT Council member as saying: “[Parents] want their children to go to school. Yet, unless they live in a settlement with a day school, or within five miles of such a settlement, they must allow their children to be taken away from them to one of these big hostels, which can be hundreds of miles away.” Grolier Hall was the site of many acts of sexual and psychological abuse.

Source: National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation. *Grolier Hall (Notre-Dame Residence)*. [nctr.ca/residential-schools/northern/grolier-hall-notre-dame-residence](https://nctr.ca/residential-schools/northern/grolier-hall-notre-dame-residence). Accessed 9 December 2024.

## Inuvik Anglican Federal Hostel

*Stringer Hall Student Residence | 1959 – 1975*

*Anglican Church of Canada | Inuvik, Northwest Territories*

Stringer Hall opened in 1959 as part of a federal government education and related construction program that established central non-denominational day schools in larger northern communities in combination with “large hostels” to house students attending the schools.

Control of the facility was transferred to the territorial government in 1969, but the Anglican Church continued to operate the school under a new contract with the territorial government until it closed.

Source: National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation. *Stringer Hall (Inuvik Anglican Hostel)*. [nctr.ca/residential-schools/northern/stringer-hall-inuvik-anglican-hostel](https://nctr.ca/residential-schools/northern/stringer-hall-inuvik-anglican-hostel). Accessed 9 December 2024.

## Akaitcho Hall

*Yellowknife Federal Hostel | 1958 – 1994*

*Non-Denominational | Yellowknife, Northwest Territories*

Akaitcho Hall opened in Yellowknife, NWT in 1958. The residence was operated by the federal government without church involvement, and, for much of its history, had a large non-Aboriginal population. Inspectors' reports show that the hostel's laundry facilities and janitorial storage were inadequate, and that office and counseling spaces were non-existent. Akaitcho Hall was transferred to the Northwest Territories government in 1969, which operated it until 1994.

Source: National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation. *Akaitcho Hall (Yellowknife Federal Hostel)*. [nctr.ca/residential-schools/northern/akaitcho-hall-yellowknife-federal-hostel](https://nctr.ca/residential-schools/northern/akaitcho-hall-yellowknife-federal-hostel). Accessed 9 December 2024.

## Grandin College

*1960 – 1985 | Roman Catholic*

*Fort Smith, Northwest Territories*

Originally established as a seminary for boys preparing to enter the priesthood, Grandin College also housed the Oblate Provincial Home. By 1962 the mandate of the college shifted to fostering the educational success of its students and the facility became co-educational.

Ultimately, Grandin College hoped to prepare future Aboriginal leaders. Although the church also administered Breynat Hall in the same community, with the exception of some overlap of staff the two facilities were administered separately. Over time federal funding to the college declined, and the school closed in 1985.

Source: National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation. *Grandin College*. [nctr.ca/residential-schools/northern/grandin-college](https://nctr.ca/residential-schools/northern/grandin-college). Accessed 9 December 2024.

## Breynat Hall

*Fort Smith Hostel | 1957 – 1975*

*Roman Catholic | Fort Smith, Northwest Territories*

Breynat Hall was part of a Canadian government project begun in the mid-1950s to build day schools and hostels in larger northern communities. Controlled by Canada until 1969, the facility was operated by the Roman Catholic Church. In 1969 Canada transferred control to the territorial government while the Catholic Church continued to run the hostel under existing agreements.

Although Breynat Hall and Grandin College were both operated by the Roman Catholic Church and were both located in Fort Smith, the two facilities, apart from sharing a few staff, were operated as separate institutions.

Source: National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation. *Breynat Hall (Fort Smith Hostel)*. [nctr.ca/residential-schools/northern/breynat-hall-fort-smith-hostel](https://nctr.ca/residential-schools/northern/breynat-hall-fort-smith-hostel). Accessed 9 December 2024.

## Reindeer Station

*1956 – 1968 | Non-Denominational*

*Reindeer Station, Northwest Territories*

At its peak, Reindeer Station was a self-sufficient community with a population of about 90 people, mainly herders and their families. Amenities included a post office, school, church, generating plant and Hudson's Bay Company trading post.

The provision of western education at Reindeer Station began with the opening of a federal day school in 1956. The school

was a one-room school during its operation. As of October 1968, only one family was left at Reindeer Station and their child was sent to Inuvik for school, boarding with a family there.

In 1968 it was noted that the school was closed, and the building moved to Port Radium for use as a school there.

## **Nora Ruben's Classes**

*Late 1960s | Non-Denominational  
Paulatuk, Northwest Territories*

The provision of western education in Paulatuk began in the late 1960s when Nora Ruben held informal classes in her own home, helped by Bertha Ruben, using books sent to her from Inuvik to teach interested children.

## **Paulatuk Territorial School**

*1974 – 1991 | Roman Catholic  
Paulatuk, Northwest Territories*

In 1974 formal school began when Sister Manning started teaching K-3 in 1974 in a small trailer. The following year another trailer and teacher were added, and the grades expanded to K-6. In 1983 a third classroom was added, and grades K-9 were taught. The Beaufort-Delta Divisional Education Council was established in 1989 to administer regional schools.



## Angik School

*1991 – 2021 | Non-Denominational  
Paulatuk, Northwest Territories*

In 1991 the Angik territorial school opened; however high school students continued to be sent to Inuvik. Renovations occurred in 1997. In 2001 Angik School graduated its first high school student, but high school grade classes were reduced, then reintroduced for 2005-2007. As of 2021 Angik School provides all grades JK-12.

## Sachs Harbour

*1968 – 1973 | Non-Denominational  
Sachs Harbour, Northwest Territories*

The provision of western education in Sachs Harbour began with some instruction from an RCMP officer, but this seems to have been of short duration. A school was constructed in the summer of 1968, first opening in fall 1968 to students in grades 1-6. Prior to the school being built, children were sent to Shingle Point, Aklavik, then Inuvik for schooling. Still, after it was built, older students continued to go to Inuvik for later grades. This school was transferred to the GNWT when it assumed responsibility for education in 1969.

## Inualthuyak School

*(1973 – ) | Non-Denominational  
Sachs Harbour, Northwest Territories*

A new school, Inualthuyak School was completed in 1973. The Beaufort-Delta Divisional Education Council was established in 1989 to administer regional schools. The Inualthuyak School was remodeled in 1993. As of 2021, grades JK-9 are offered. Students continuing to grade 10-12 board in homes in Inuvik while going to East Three Secondary School.

## **Tuktoyaktuk Anglican School**

*1947 – 1948 | Anglican  
Tuktoyaktuk, Northwest Territories*

The provision of western education in Tuktoyaktuk began with the Anglican Tuktoyaktuk Day School in 1947, which was soon taken over by the federal government in 1948. Prior to 1947 students went to residential school in Aklavik.

## **Tuktoyaktuk Federal Day School**

*1948 – 1989 | Non-Denominational  
Tuktoyaktuk, Northwest Territories*

In 1948 the Tuktoyaktuk Federal Day School was noted to be the first federally funded school provided to Inuit children. The school grew steadily, with one teacher in 1948, two in 1956, three in 1957, and four in 1959. A new five-room school was built in 1963/64 to replace the four-room school. In 1965 a new seven-room school was built which accommodated 120 students in grades 1-8, and school lunches were provided every day. In 1969 this school was transferred to the GNWT when it assumed responsibility for education.

## **Mangilaluk School**

*1989 – 2021 | Non-Denominational  
Tuktoyaktuk, Northwest Territories*

In 1989 the new Mangilaluk School was opened, which supported grades K-8. The Beaufort-Delta Divisional Education Council was established in 1989 to administer regional schools. There were major renovations to Mangilaluk School in 2007. In 2021 it was under renovation. It offers grades JK-12.

## Holman Island Federal Day School/ Holman Island School

1965 – 1974 | *Non-Denominational*  
*Ulukhaktok, Northwest Territories*

The provision of western education in Ulukhaktok began in 1965 when a new two-room school was built. Grades 1-6 were taught until 1968/69 when it expanded to grades 1-8. The facility was taken over by the territorial government in 1969. A third portable classroom was added in 1971/72.

## Holman Island School

1974 – 1986 | *Non-Denominational*  
*Ulukhaktok, Northwest Territories*

In 1974 a new school was completed and grades 1-9 were offered. In 1986 another new school was opened. The Beaufort-Delta Divisional Education Council was established in 1989 to administer regional schools. In 2002 a major addition was completed which added a gymnasium, an industrial education shop and a secondary school classroom wing. In 2018, repairs to the foundation and some renovations were completed. As of 2021 the school offers grades JK-12.

**Sources:** *Report on the History of NWT Educational Facilities, Department of Education, Culture and Employment, NWT Archives. Version 4, February 2024. See: [report-on-history-of-nwt-educational-facilities.pdf](#).*

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*Students at the All Saints Residential School, Aklavik, Northwest Territories. Inuvialuit community has identified the following: front row right – Martha Arey, second row: third from right – Florence Sittichinlii nee Arey, fourth from right – Elizabeth Kunnizee nee Greenland; third row: second from right – Rhoda Kayotuk nee Dick, third row: third from right – Louisa Kalinek nee Edwards, fourth row: first from right – Jim Edwards, Anglican Priest. Please contact IRC if you can identify any others. (Photo credit: Erin Firth).*





***Danny Sydney, Inuvialuit  
former Shingle Point  
Residential School  
student from 1929-1932.  
(Photo credit: Erin Firth).***

“Over these 70 years four generations of Inuvialuit children were separated from their families and subject to the residential school system. Some of these children did not return home. This is a tragedy, and Inuvialuit families continue to suffer because they do not know what happened to their children, or do not know if they are resting respectfully.”

- Duane Ningasiq Smith, IRC Chair and CEO

