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Export date: Sat Oct 31 4:17:19 2026 / +0000 GMT

Orange Shirt Day Walk slated for Oct. 2 to honour residental school victims

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The Town of Shelburne is planning to hold an Orange Shirt Day Walk in honour of residential school survivors and missing children on Oct. 2.

While Orange Shirt Day is marked annually on Sept. 30, Shelburne Town councillor Lindsay Wegener, in a Facebook post said the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee chose to hold the walk after Orange Shirt Day as the weekend date would allow for more participation.

Orange Shirt Day, which now coincides with the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation, honours survivors of Canada's residential school system and missing Indigenous children.

Orange Shirt Day is inspired by Phyllis Webstad's story. At the age of six, Webstad arrived at the St. Joseph Mission residential school wearing an orange shirt brought by her grandmother, and the shirt was taken away from her. The date of Sept. 30 marks the time of year that children were taken from their homes.

The 1st National Day for Truth and Reconciliation, a new statutory holiday, is also marked for Sept. 30 and is a direct response to one of the 94 calls to action laid out in the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

The Shelburne Orange Shirt Walk will begin at 2 p.m. on Oct. 2 with an opening ceremony presented by the Town's Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) Committee as well as a smudging and drumming ceremony. The walk will start and end at Greenwood Park. Shelburne Mayor Wade Mills and Deputy Mayor Steven Anderson will close out the event with final remarks.

A map and itinerary for the walk is available on the Town of Shelburne website.

For immediate assistance, the National Indian Residential School Crisis Line is available 24/7 at 1-866-925-4419.