



NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release
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TOWN FLAGS AT HALF MAST

SMITHERS – The Town of Smithers' flags will be flown at half mast until further notice to honour the 215 children whose lives were taken at the former Kamloops residential school and all Indigenous children who never made it home, the survivors, and their families.

Mayor Gladys Atrill is issuing the following statement:

"The Town of Smithers has lowered our flags to half mast in to honour the 215 children who died at the Kamloops Residential School and whose bodies were recently discovered in an unmarked grave.

We acknowledge the horror of this discovery and the trauma it brings to the families of these children, and to the survivors of residential schools across Canada. To the Tk'emlúps te Secwépemc First Nation we offer our deepest condolences for the grief you are feeling at this discovery, and we are grieving with you.

The history of residential schools in Canada, including in Northwestern BC, has left a wound that will take generations to recover from. The forceful removal of Indigenous children from their families and communities coupled with the treatment many of those children received at residential schools is shameful. While it is sometimes said we must look at history through the lens of the time in which incidents occurred, I cannot fathom it was ever the right time to separate children from families or to place their bodies in mass graves where their loved ones would not find them.

This discovery and the memory of children lost, and families separated, should not be forgotten, but rather guide our conversations about how we do better into the future."

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