

WORLD-CHANGING KIDS

# Writing Letters for Reconciliation

Template for kids ages 7-13 and their families



Topic: Residential Schools  
Calls to Action 71 through to 76

## Things Are Moving Too Slowly On This Issue

After 12 year old Charlie Wenjack died trying to escape his school in 1966, a formal investigation was undertaken. The all-white jury found that residential schools caused tremendous emotional and psychological trauma - but then, residential schools remained open for another 30 years.

Then another federal inquiry was launched in 1991. Then funding was approved to set up the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) in 2007. The TRC released their Final Report in 2015 with 94 Calls to Action to assist in the process of Reconciliation.

And now it's 2021 - 55 years after the first formal investigation into residential schools following Charlie Wenjack's death. 55 years.

Circles For Reconciliation and Reconciliation Thunder created a powerful #94in94 Campaign to raise awareness of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's 94 Calls to Action. Daily, the #94in94 campaign highlighted each of the 94 Calls to Action in as many days, encouraging people across Turtle Island to take action in a variety of ways. The campaign concluded on September 30 in honour of Orange Shirt Day and the first National Day for Truth and Reconciliation, commemorating the tragic legacy of residential schools in Canada.

You can follow these amazing organizations here:

[www.circlesforreconciliation.ca](http://www.circlesforreconciliation.ca)

[www.reconciliationthunder.org](http://www.reconciliationthunder.org)

[www.facebook.com/CirclesForReconciliation](https://www.facebook.com/CirclesForReconciliation)

[www.facebook.com/ReconciliationThunder](https://www.facebook.com/ReconciliationThunder)

## Step One: Date, Contact Info, Greeting

Sept 16, 2021

The Right Honourable  
Prime Minister of Canada  
80 Wellington Street  
Ottawa, ON K1P 5K9

Dear Prime Minister Trudeau,

Step Two: First Paragraph - State your purpose for writing the letter. You can choose one of these options (a shorter or longer version) or come up with your own.

I am writing to demand that your government do whatever it takes to find the remains of all the children who never came home from residential schools and help the families honour these children properly.

Residential “schools” were schools in name only. Children were ripped from their homes and placed in these institutions, where they’d be systematically stripped of their culture and, in many cases, subjected to horrific abuses. Many children died at these institutions.

As of August 2021, more than 1,300 graves had been identified using ground-penetrating radar at only four of the 139 federally run residential schools. Adding this to the deaths we already knew about, the current official number of 4,120 students known to have died in the schools will end up being only a fraction of the actual total.

Step Three: Second Paragraph - Add info explaining why this issue is important to you. You can choose one or both of these options or come up with your own.

While the doors of the last residential school closed in 1997, the impacts continue to be felt in a number of ways — from the internalized shame taught in school and passed down to younger generations, to the ongoing separation of families in the foster care system.

Addressing these ongoing issues is a key part of helping to right the wrongs of the residential school system, but finding the remains of the children who never came home is also an important source of healing, according to survivors who lost loved ones in residential schools.

Step Four: Third Paragraph - Include clear requests. You can choose one or both of these options or come up with your own.

I am urging you to fully implement Calls to Action 71 through 76 from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Final Report, as they relate to residential schools, missing children and burial information.

These Calls to Action ask your government to ensure that the deaths of Indigenous children in the care of residential schools are properly recorded and shared with families. They ask you to respond to families' wishes for appropriate ceremonies and markers to honour the deceased children – letting the Indigenous communities lead in all these actions.

These are all requests that are filled with kindness and compassion and that will help the families heal. Fulfilling these requests is the least we can do.

Step Five: Final Paragraph - Ask questions and request a response. You can choose these questions or come up with your own.

Will you commit to making this a priority?

How will you ensure that you are making real progress on these Calls to Action?

Please respond with answer to these questions.



Step Six: Closing - Include your name, age and address at the end of the letter.

Sincerely,

Signature

Name

Age

Street Address

City, Province Postal Code