

OCTOBER 2026

SPARKS NOTES

Similkameen Elementary Secondary Monthly Bulletin

Principal's Message:

Dear SESS Families,

Welcome to October! We had a wonderful and busy September with many activities including the Terry Fox Run, curricular field trips, sports teams starting up, Welcome Back BBQ and Truth and Reconciliation activities. On Tuesday our school recognized Orange Shirt Day and The National Day for Truth and Reconciliation with an assembly and guest performer. Poppa Nuge wowed us with their beatboxing and throat singing skills. They also spoke to us about the idea that Truth and Reconciliation doesn't just happen on one day and that we can and should support Truth and Reconciliation every day. We were also lucky to hear from Chief Charlie Allison of USIB who also left us with positive messages of learning and small daily actions. We acknowledge that our school's commitment to reconciliation extends far beyond a single day and must continue to be reflected in everything we do at SESS.

Students are now settled into the routines of their classes, and extra-curricular activities are in full swing including volleyball, soccer, cross-country, and band. We are looking forward to hosting parents and families in person on October 21st for our Family Conferences. For your planning purposes please remember that October 21 & 22 are early dismissal days and there are no classes on October 23. Please watch your email for more information about Family Conferences and booking links coming soon. I hope that you enjoy some time together outside taking in the beautiful colours of autumn in our gorgeous valley.

Sincerely,
Stacey Smith



Principal: S. Smith
ssmith@sd53.bc.ca
Vice Principal: K. Anderson
kanderso@sd53.bc.ca
Phone: (250) 499-2727
www.sess.sd53.bc.ca

Important Dates:

October

- 2 Elementary Sparks Assembly
- 5 Elem Soccer Exhibition @ OSE
- 7-9 Outdoor Ed to Camp Linley
- 8 District Elem xCountry @ CPS
- 12 Thanksgiving (No School)
- 15-16 Band Camp @ Camp Tulahead
- 19 District Elem Soccer Tournament
- 21 Family Conferences (1/2 Day)
- 21 PAC Meeting @ 5:30 in library
- 22 Photo Retakes (Early Dismissal)
- 23 Prov. Pro-D Day (No School)
- 28 Inquiry Time (Early Dismissal)
- 30 SESS Hallowe'en

Please check out our [website](http://www.sess.sd53.bc.ca) for all upcoming events



Where to get SESS news?



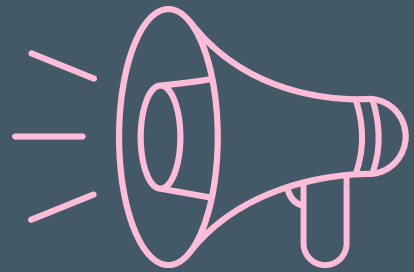
The best way to access news and information about SESS is through our school website at sess.sd53.bc.ca which is continually updated. On the website you will find news items as well as our calendar of events. We also have links to various resources for parents and students and other practical information such as our timetable, code of conduct, bus routes and schedules. SESS also has various social media accounts which we encourage you to check out!



Facebook: [@SimilkameenSchool](https://www.facebook.com/SimilkameenSchool)



Instagram: [@similkameensparks](https://www.instagram.com/similkameensparks)



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Welcome to Similkameen Elementary Secondary School

[Learn More](#)

Fall Family Conferences

Please watch for information in your email about appointments for Parent-Teacher Conferences on **Wednesday, October 21st**. Conferences will be conducted in-person. Teachers will be available to meet with parents between 1 - 3 and 4 - 6pm. Early dismissals will be at 12:00 pm on October 21st and on October 22nd. Friday October 23rd is a Pro-D day.



Bus Expectations & Passes

Expectations for bus behaviour have been shared with all students in Elementary and High School. Students are expected to follow the school's Code of Conduct when riding the bus.

When students will be riding as a guest on a bus that they are not registered on, parents/guardians must contact the office to ask for a bus pass. These passes will be signed by Administration and given to students to present to the bus driver when boarding the bus.

Please complete this planning with the office and your child(ren) before 1:00pm on the day of travel



School Fees 2026-2027

SCHOOL FEES CAN BE PAID BY CASH OR CHEQUE IN THE OFFICE (PLEASE MAKE ANY CHEQUES PAYABLE TO SIMILKAMEEN ELEMENTARY SECONDARY). CREDIT CARD PAYMENTS CAN ALSO BE MADE ONLINE (SEE STUDENT QUICK PAY INFO)

GRADES 5-7- \$40.00

THIS IS A \$40.00 ACTIVITY FEE WHICH HELPS WITH THE COSTS OF ACTIVITIES SUCH AS ICE SKATING AND SPIRIT DAYS.

GRADE 8 & ANY SECONDARY STUDENTS WHO ARE NEW TO THE SCHOOL - \$60.00

THIS INCLUDES A \$40.00 ACTIVITY FEE AND A \$20.00 REFUNDABLE TEXTBOOK DEPOSIT.

GRADE 9-11- \$40.00 THIS IS AN ACTIVITY FEE.

GRADE 12- \$200.00

THIS INCLUDES A \$40.00 SCHOOL ACTIVITY FEE AS WELL AS A \$160.00 COMMENCEMENT FEE WHICH INCLUDES FEES FOR THE GRADUATION CEREMONY, CAP & GOWN RENTALS, PHOTOS, DIPLOMAS, ETC.



Online Payment System

Student Quick Pay allows you to pay by credit card online [HERE](#). You will be able to add money to your child's lunch account, pay student fees, and athletic fees, all from the comfort of your own home! Please [click this link for instructions](#) on how to set up your account. If you have any questions or difficulties, please email sessoffice@sd53.bc.ca

Truth & Reconciliation Day at SESS

Staff and students at SESS recognized Orange Shirt Day and the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation by holding an assembly, and providing multiple opportunities to learn about and reflect on the historical wrongs committed against Indigenous people. At SESS we know that our commitment to Truth and Reconciliation extends far beyond a single day.



Resources to Support Learning about Truth & Reconciliation

There are many published resources available to support anyone who wants to learn more about the history of Residential Schools and the impacts of colonization on Indigenous people. If you cannot access these resources and would like to borrow one from the school please email seffice@sd53.bc.ca. This [video from Monique Gray Smith](#) has some excellent suggestions for ways to speak with your child about Residential Schools (as well as some recommended resources for children/teens). The video "[Orange Shirt Day- Truth and Reconciliation in Canada](#)" is the video most often shown to explain the original origins of Orange Shirt Day. Below are more resources:

[Final Report from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada \(2015\)](#)

Books/Novels (for teens/adults):

Take the Indian Out of the Child: Syilx Okanagan Experiences in the Violent and Forced Assimilation of Indian Residential Schools (published by the Okanagan Nation Alliance)

Indian Horse by Richard Wagamese

They Called Me Number One by Bev Sellars

21 Things You May Not Know About the Indian Act by Bob Joseph

Films (for teens/adults):

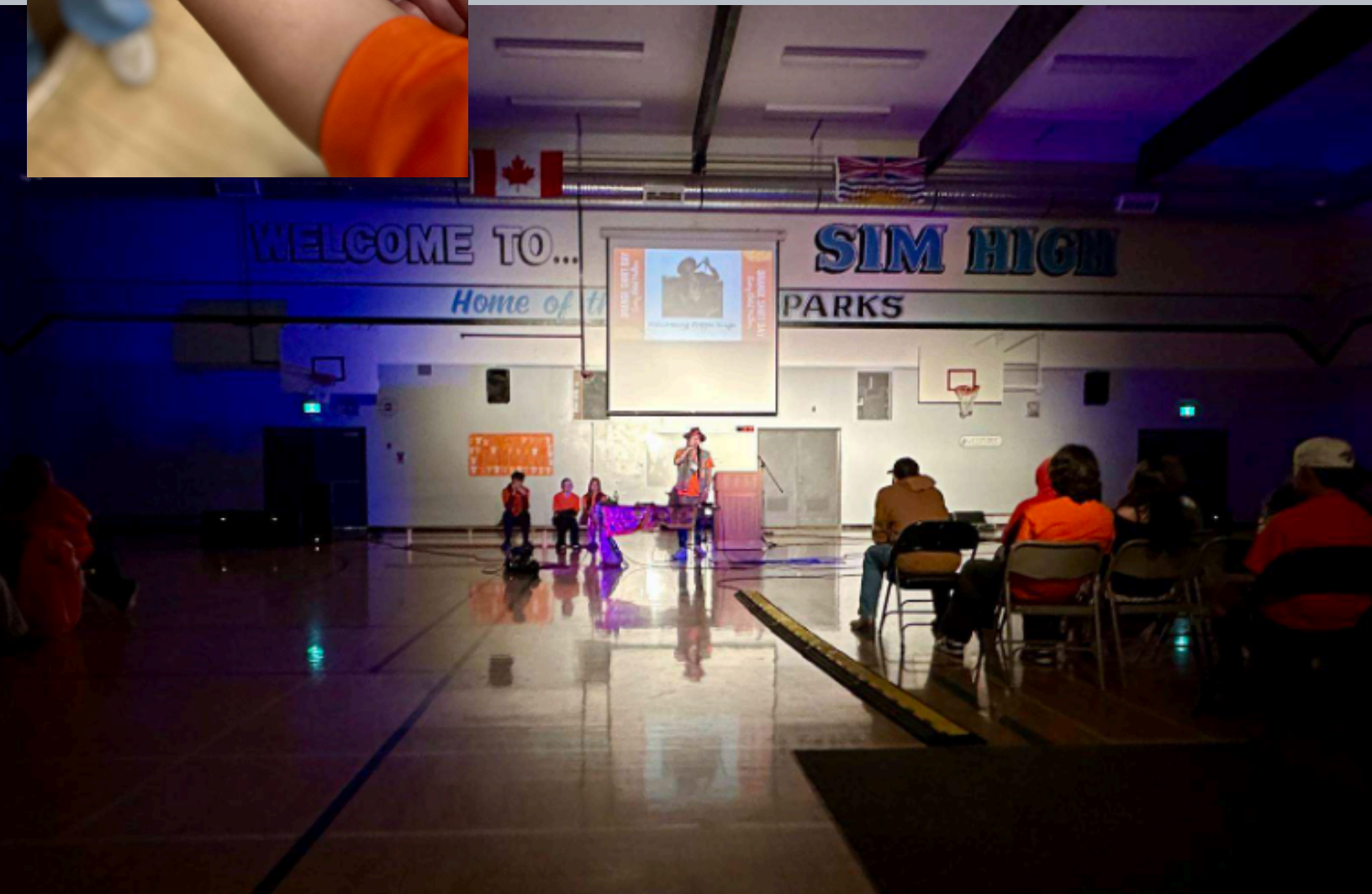
[*We Were Children* \(National Film Board\)](#)

[*Indian Horse* \(CBC Gem\)](#)

National Residential School Crisis
Line (24 hrs): 1-866-925-4419



Truth & Reconciliation Day at SESS



ATTENDANCE MATTERS!

Regular attendance is the key to your child's success at school.

Chronic absences make it difficult for students to learn the necessary skills to be successful, and they also put a lot of pressure on staff to support students who miss a significant amount of in-class learning. As always we are focusing on attendance, and our priority will be communicating with families about the importance of students consistently showing up each day. Our automated callout system is used to notify secondary parents each evening if a student has an unexcused absence. A reminder that if your child misses school due to illness or a family commitment, then a parent or guardian must contact the school to excuse the absence.

Visitor Sign-In

Parents and caregivers, please ensure you are checking in at the office when visiting SESS. All visitors to SESS are meant to sign in at the office prior to entering other parts of the school building. This is to ensure the safety of students and staff and to minimize distractions in the hallways and classrooms. If you need to speak to, or get something to your child, the office staff are always happy to help.



Fall Athletics

**Thank you
coaches!**

Elementary Soccer (Boys & Girls) - Boys - Mr. Fortune & Mr. Pillipow **Girls** - Mishak & Amber Potash

Elementary Cross-Country - Ms. de Jong

Elementary Volleyball - Ms. Chmelyk & Mishak

Junior Girls Volleyball - Mr. Toneatto & Ms. Fotheringham

Senior Girls Volleyball - Taylor Moberge

Senior Boys Soccer - Mr. Kessler

Senior Cross-Country - Mr. Johnson

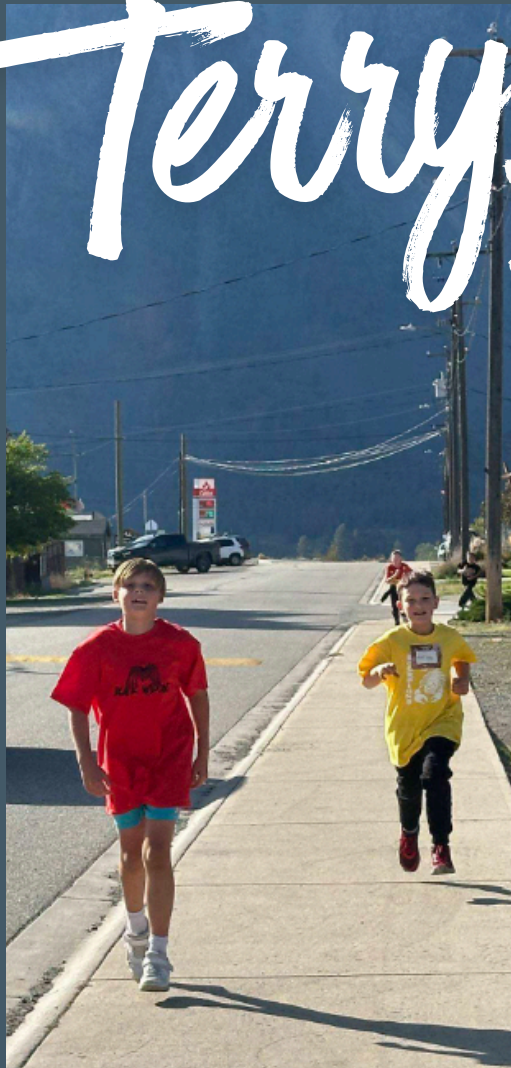


Grad 2027

The Grad class of 2026 have begun their grade 12 year with a sizzle, many volunteering for our local SizzleFest! They have also had their first bottle drive and staff celebrated them during our Grad Breakfast. Just a reminder to Grads to join the Spaces Grad Group in order to keep updated on important Grad happenings and due dates.



Terry Fox



All the September fun!



October Events



OCT
8
8:30 - 1:00
*Elementary District X
Country @ CPS*



OCT
7-9 
*Outdoor Ed Camping
Trip*



OCT
12
NO SCHOOL
Thanksgiving

OCT
19 
8:30-12:30
Grade 11 Career Fair

OCT
19 
*Elementary District
Soccer Tournaments*

OCT
15-16 
*Band Camp @ Camp
Tulahead*

OCT
21 
1:00-6:00
*Family Conferences
EARLY DISMISSAL*

 OCT
22
*EARLY DISMISSAL
&
Photo Retakes*



OCT **23**
ProD Day - No School

OCTOBER 21



**FAMILY
CONFERENCES**

October 21st @ SESS
1:00-3:00 and 4:00-6:00



**BAKE
SALE**

Come out and enjoy some
amazing baking and donate to
our grad class and elementary
extra-curricular activities!



**LOOKING
FORWARD TO
SEEING YOU
SOON!**