Sample letter to parents (please personalize),

Dear Parent/Guardian:

During the (next couple of weeks, month of October, specific dates and times) your child will be learning about Indian Residential Schools and reconciliation as part of the British Columbia social studies curriculum. These lessons were developed to provide age-appropriate educational materials about Residential Schools to foster open dialogue and strengthen the relationship between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people in Canada.

It is important that we deal with the topic of Residential Schools with sensitivity. For some students the topics discussed may be sensitive, especially if they have personal connections with residential school survivors. For others, the topics may be controversial, particularly if they feel they have no connection with the issues. We will ensure that the topics are presented fairly and with sensitivity. We will allow students the space and time to reflect in a safe environment and will focus on healthy ways to engage in self-care.

The following information is taken from this resource newly available to teachers, Indian Residential Schools & Reconciliation, Teacher Resource Guide (for more information see, [www.fnesc.ca/learningfirstpeoples/indian-residential-schools-and-reconciliation](http://www.fnesc.ca/learningfirstpeoples/indian-residential-schools-and-reconciliation) ),

Rationale: The colonial foundations of our country resulted in a relationship between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people that was always unbalanced and unjust. This relationship manifested itself in many ways, including the treatment of Indigenous people as wards of the government, the loss of land and language, and the banning of cultural practices that has sustained the diverse First Nations for millennia. A key component on this relationship was the imposition of the residential schools.

What was the **Residential School System?** The residential school system was a collaboration between the Government of Canada and the mainstream churches, to educate First Nations children in an environment that removed them from the influences of their families and culture. The explicit goal was to “civilize and Christianize” the children and to teach them basic trades for the boys and domestic skills for the girls. The system was based on a colonial, racist world view that Euro-Canadian society was superior and First Nations culture and people were inferior.

What is **Reconciliation**? A dictionary definition of “reconciliation” is the reestablishment of a broken relationship, or forging positive accord where there was discord. In the words of Reconciliation Canada, it is “based on the idea of restoring friendship and harmony – about resolving differences, accepting the past and working together to build a better future.”

For the last six years, The Truth and Reconciliation Commission, has been gathering research, statements, and documents about the legacy of Residential Schools from across our country. The commission was established to contribute to truth, healing and reconciliation. The results of those findings and the following quote, can be found on the website, [www.trc.ca](http://www.trc.ca),

“The reconciliation movement has begun and the TRC believes that the momentum will continue as more Canadians learn about the stories of brave children who survived the Residential School System and its legacy.”

If you have any questions or concerns please feel free to contact me at:

Email address

Phone number

Sincerely,

Teacher Name