

CHILDREN OF THE EARTH HIGH SCHOOL REPORT TO THE COMMUNITY



2025-2026

<https://www.winnipegsd.ca/childrenoftheearth>

Children of the Earth is an Indigenous high school, distinct in Winnipeg School Division and in the Province of Manitoba.

Students choose to attend our school because they are committed to walking an Indigenous path throughout their lives. They come to learn language and culture, strengthen their identity, and deepen their understanding of the true histories of Indigenous peoples and nations. Many of our students also navigate ongoing challenges related to economic and social inequities that stem from historical and continuing marginalization.

Children of the Earth High School is grounded in Indigenous perspectives and pedagogies that are student-centred, relationship-based, and rooted in experiential learning. Through internship, mentorship, cultural teachings, and project-based learning opportunities, students engage in meaningful, connected, and active learning that supports both academic success and personal growth.

Through our daily work with students, we are intentional in honouring the commitment and perseverance our students demonstrate. With admiration, we recognize that our students make a choice to attend our school to do the difficult work of revitalizing Indigenous languages and cultures, and becoming leaders within their communities through the work they undertake and the knowledge they carry forward – despite the barriers they may face.

School Priorities: (1) Indigenous languages, voices, and worldview lead our way (2) The sacred well-being of our students (3) Meaningful relationships with families and community members

NURTURING A JUST, SUSTAINABLE, & DEMOCRATIC SOCIETY WHERE EVERYONE BELONGS, THRIVES, AND IS INCLUDED

Children of the Earth aims to change the lived realities of our families, communities, and future generations.

We value our students for who they are, and we nurture the gifts and talents they bring. Real-world learning opportunities prepare students to share their gifts and talents with their community and to lead our nations with strength, wisdom, and courage. Nurturing relationship, responsibility, respect, relevance, reciprocity, and representation is central in our language, cultural, and academic programming.

This work – creating leaders who can easily navigate both Indigenous and non-Indigenous worlds – supports reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people.

When we look ahead, we envision a growing collective of graduates from Children of the Earth who know who they are, who know their history, and who are prepared to speak truth and seek reconciliation.



IGNITING AND CULTIVATING PATHS TO MINO-PIMATISIWIN

Students have one teacher, called an advisor, for most classes. Advisors guide students' learning through interests in the community and in the classroom through interdisciplinary, real-world projects that build on students' strengths and talents.

Advisors facilitate group discussions, run learning workshops and build strong relationships with students. Advisors also build strong relationships with caregivers and are their primary point of contact at the school.

Advisory

Project- Based Learning

Students and advisors work together to plan real-world, meaningful, and interdisciplinary projects in order for students to access the learning outcomes of core and elective courses in the Manitoba curriculum. Student learning is designed to be personally relevant and to matter in the real world, helping students to develop deep understandings of themselves and their world.

All students come to us with rich gifts, strengths, and talents, and programming is developed for individual students based on these interests so students can discover new passions, build on their strengths, and have meaningful and individual educational experiences. Students and advisors track all projects and other learning activities using an Individual Learning Plan and Portfolio. Students demonstrate their learning in many way, including through exhibitions of learning 4 times per year.

One Student at a Time

Leaving to Learn

Often, students leave the school as a group to learn on the land or in the community. These opportunities complement the work students are doing in class on their projects. This also offers students the opportunity to develop varied skills and knowledge, and introduces new and exciting possibilities for their future. Advisory group, grade group, and full school opportunities to leave to learn are offered.

Everything begins with building strong, supportive learning relationships. Designing learning experiences with students' goals in mind creates a rigorous educational experience that allows students to deeply connect and engage with their learning both in and out of the classroom. Knowing and valuing our students, and relevant, rigorous teaching ensures their access to mino-pimatisitwin.

Relationships Relevance Rigour

Indigenous Languages and Cultural Practices

Through language classes and cultural programming, students develop their Indigenous identity, grow to understand worldviews, and practice our ways of knowing, being, doing, and becoming. Our focus on deep and rigorous learning for all students is enhanced by the centrality of our language and cultural programming.

SCHOOL HIGHLIGHTS

JOY

Creating a sense of
community

LOVE

Supporting a sense of
belonging

RIGOUR

Preparing learners for
excellence

- Traditional cultural ceremonies: smudge, pipe ceremony, seasonal feasts, sweat lodge, traditional practical and spiritual teachings
- Anishinabe and Ininimowin courses grade 9-12
- Mentorship opportunities every Wednesday during Learning Through Interest/Learning Through Internship: BrightFire Artist Collective, Bear Clan Mentorship, Oskabewis work, Kitchen Brigades, Thunderbird Cafe
- Certification opportunities: Young Workers' Readiness, Food Handler's Certificate, Babysitting Certification, CPR/First Aid
- First Peoples Development Incorporated Robotics & Coding mini-course
- Orange Shirt Day Remembrance Walk: partnership with Urban Circle and RB Russell
- Students participating in Youth Biolab
- CBC's North of North cast visit
- Indigenous Veteran's Day observance
- SEED Money Management Workshop Series
- Coffee House Talent Show
- Sewing Workshop & Red Dress Day Presentation provided by Southern Chief's Organization
- Burnstick Music Performance and Workshop
- Singing and drumming practice
- Guitar building workshop @ Waabishkaa-Makwa
- Graffiti Workshop with Justin Porier and Neil Strewner
- North End Connect and Manitoba Internet Society Workshop Series: Build a Computer; Networking
- Indigenous Vision for the North End - laptop giveaway program
- WSD Graduation Pow Wow
- North End Grad Walk
- After School Programming grant funded by Neeginan Education, Training, and Employment Services, Inc.



LEARNING FROM AKI

Learning on the land continues to be a central part of our cultural programming. Opportunities this year included:

- Fall and Spring Camp
- Little Mountain Park: We sat in circle, heard teachings from our knowledge keepers, enjoyed a feast prepared on the land, and developed community.
- Nibi Gathering at Bannock Point, hosted by the First Nations Health and Social Secretariat of Manitoba
- Medicine harvest
- Traditional foods preparation: plucking fowl, cleaning fish, making bannock, _____
- Fire Keeping teachings
- Eagle teachings
- Sweat lodges
- “Using our Land is Protecting Our Land” Workshop on Peguis FN

In the coldest months, we brought the land into the school! Students:

- learned to drum and sing
- did hide work



Learning Lodge: in September constructed a learning lodge in the field adjacent to Children of the Earth and Niji Mahkwa. This space has been developed and cared for by students and staff from Children of the Earth, Niji Mahkwa, and St. John’s High School. This sacred learning space will be used and kept in trust for all of the young people in our community.



LANGUAGE PROGRAMS

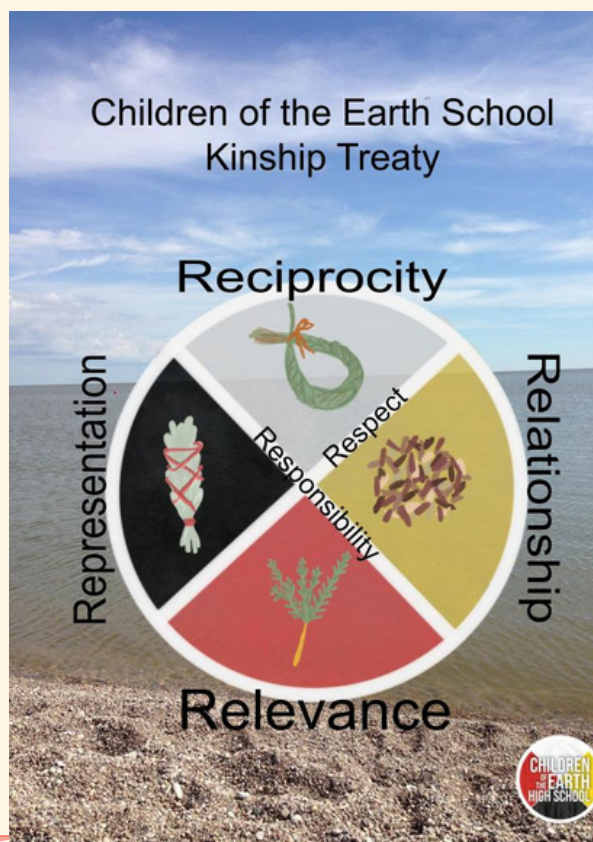
Our Language courses motivate our young people to keep our ancestral languages alive.

Anishinabe:

This school year students concentrated their language and cultural learning on Murray Sinclair's Four Questions for a Life and Nation: Who am I? Where do I come from? Why am I here? Where am I going? In order to answer these questions students were required to write a story about themselves using these questions as a guide. In their stories, language translations were required. Students also had opportunities to share their language and culture in school and within the community.

Ininimowin:

Courses continue to have the guidance of Cree Teachers Ellen Cook and Lena Cooper, with a particular focus on syllabics. Students are making progress in revitalizing the language, as they are definitely able to remember what they have learned from year to year. Students are gaining confidence and beginning to have conversations! I have encouraged them to keep integrating Cree into their work and their daily lives via conversations at schools, amongst themselves socially and at school and very importantly, at home.



Relationship

Through cultural teachings and with support from advisors and staff, Children of the Earth students will develop and honour a relationship with themselves that extends into the stories, languages, and ways of knowing/being/living of our People. Children of the Earth staff will work with caregivers and the community to deepen our relationship with the space where our school is located.

Relevance

Students will see themselves reflected in the learning work that they do within the classroom, expanding into community work and internships. Students will take risks with learning to help them develop the necessary skills for success.

Representation

Students and staff will walk on Mother Earth in the ways that our ancestors show us: according to the Seven Teachings, Medicine Wheel Teachings, Natural Laws, and Ceremony. The Sacred nature of each person is emphasized and recalled to help us to solve problems when they arise.

Reciprocity

At Children of the Earth, we will all have the opportunity to give back in meaningful ways to our school, families, and community at large through our Kinship Treaty, Knowledge Sharing, and Mentorship.

Respect

We all have the responsibility to respect our cultural practices, Creation, and natural laws; the people within our building, our kin, and the space where we gather to learn and share. We will also develop and foster respect for our community and the people that live within it, by learning how to take care of our relatives. The Winnipeg School Division Code of Conduct will support all of us in this work.

Responsibility

We all have the responsibility to uphold each area of the Kinship Treaty. We are responsible to be present, to engage in our work, to build relationships, and to immerse ourselves in cultural practices and language. We are responsible to ourselves, to each other, to our ancestors, and to future generations.

A LOOK INSIDE 2025-2026



This reimagining of the Arlington street bridge has four observation areas, sidewalks, and a dedicated bike lane. In this model, two lanes go south and one lane goes north, and this decision is based on data from traffic studies conducted by the city..

Exhibitions, Projects, and Student Curiosity

Our Indigenous culture embraces and encourages the curious spirit of our youth. At Children of the Earth High School, we are taking that traditional teaching and showing students that curiosity can be something that really does spark change. Many of our students complete projects based on a curiosity, a wondering, something that they're really interested in learning more about - or just sharing with others. Advisors mentor each student with suggestions, guidance, and encouragement.

LEAVING TO LEARN

Learning is everywhere! Students at Children of the Earth have many opportunities to leave the school building to learn in community. Below is a list of all the places students have spent time learning this year:

- Canadian Museum of Human Rights
- Bruce Campbell Farm and Food Discovery Centre
- Centre Cultural Franco Manitoban
- Health Sciences Centre Lab
- Red River Polytech
- University of Manitoba
- University of Winnipeg
- Forks Treaty Centre
- Manitoba Museum
- Winnipeg Art Gallery
- Birds Hill Park
- Little Mountain Park
- Education is the New Buffalo Education Gathering at University of Manitoba
- McNally Robinson
- Inner City Science Centre
- Career Fair at Assiniboia Downs
- "Using our Land is Protecting our Land" gathering in Peguis



A LOOK INSIDE 2025-2026

BrightFire Ishkode Artist Collective: Lighting the Fire

"When students see themselves in their learning, they bring their whole fire."

This year, we opened our new student-run art shop! Here, young artists create, display, and sell their artwork, clothing, beadwork, and other art products. In the process, they learn business and entrepreneurship skills and gain confidence as young artists.

Our artists have had pop-up shops this year at our Family of Schools conference in February, at the BPL Winnipeg conference in April, and at the WSD Graduation Pow Wow in June. They have also set up online ordering so it's easy to buy their great products!

Every purchase supports student creators and helps fund supplies, cultural projects, and mentorship programs. This is a space where creativity becomes community impact.

School to School Art Partnerships

As a part of their internship on Wednesdays, the BrightFire Ishkode Artists mentored other young artists from a few nearby elementary schools – Faraday, Strathcona, Dufferin, and students from Cross Lake. Each mentorship included an art focus, a cultural and language focus, and hands on enrichment opportunities to help the young artists imagine their ideas and make them come to life through art!



A LOOK INSIDE 2025-2026

Basketball Thrives in the North End

The 2025-2026 school year brought together a group of students at Children of the Earth High School who shared a growing passion for basketball. What began as casual pick-up games, shootarounds, 3-on-3s, and learning experiences in Physical Education classes gradually developed into something much more meaningful.

Through the establishment of a positive connection with R.B. Russell High School, our group of students began practicing regularly at both schools. Throughout the year, they demonstrated consistent growth—not only in their basketball skills, but also in their dedication, teamwork, and sense of responsibility to one another.

With the support and collaboration of staff from both R.B. Russell and Children of the Earth, several games were organized between the two schools. What emerged was a strong sense of community, shared purpose, and brotherhood among the players—something truly inspiring to witness. Several students who began the year with little experience in the sport developed into passionate, fast-improving athletes. By the end of the year, many had taken on leadership roles, supporting and mentoring younger peers with confidence.

The commitment and enthusiasm these students have shown through their love of basketball have laid a strong foundation for the future. Their efforts are helping to build a lasting basketball and broader athletic community at Children of the Earth High School for years to come.



A LOOK INSIDE 2025-2026

Robotics Programming In December, the First Nations People's Development Corporation delivered a one-week Robotics program that focused on complex coding and problem solving. Students had a lot of success in this work, gaining confidence and new skills while learning about future career possibilities and nurturing curiosities!

Artist in Residence Sheila Cailleau On Wednesdays, Sheila provided our students with an internal internship opportunity where she mentored a group of students interested in textile art and design. Students started this relationship with her by participating in the "Make One, Take One" program, where two pairs of mittens are made by each student: one pair is for themselves, and one pair is for someone else in need. Students also made a variety of beaded items and other leather goods over the course of the year, learning so much about working with textiles and benefiting from Sheila's gentle mentorship!



AWARD WINNERS

Children of the Earth students **Marie Hartie** and **Tanaya Thordarson** were honoured when they were presented with **Manitoba Indigenous Youth Achievement Awards**. Marie won in the "Employment in a Traditional Field" category, and Tanaya won the Linda Park Memorial Award for Business and entrepreneurship.

At the **Honouring Indigenous Excellence** awards ceremony, **Jordan Shorting** was honoured in the Anishinabe language category, and **Rielle Bittern** won in the Ininimowin language category.



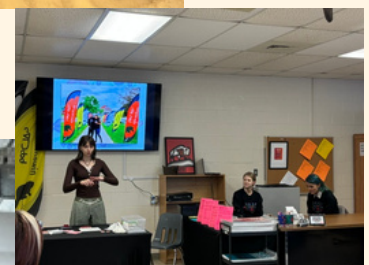
A LOOK INSIDE 2025-2026

Leading the Way in Indigenous Education

Children of the Earth co-hosted two major educational conferences in the 2025-2026 school year.

In February, the Children of the Earth / St. John's Family of Schools conference, called Igniting and Cultivating Paths to Mino-Pimatisiwin, was held at both RB Russell and at Children of the Earth. This conference, offering a morning keynote with Wally Chartrand, and afternoon keynote with Niigaan Sinclair, and over 30 workshops for the morning and afternoon, saw well over 250 teachers and support staff registered and participating in rich cultural and pedagogical learning. Workshops were designed and facilitated by teacher from our family of schools, demonstrating that we have the knowledge to change the world for our learners already - we just need to keep fanning this flame!

In April, Children of the Earth, Argyle, General Wolfe, Tec Voc, and the Superintendents' team organized BPL Winnipeg - a two day conference exploring Big Picture Learning. On day one, participants learned about Big Picture Learning from staff, students, and design coaches that are deeply involved in the work. The afternoon was for Leaving to Learn, and Children of the Earth hosted two groups: one group focussed on our community partnerships, and the second group met in our school to discuss the ins and outs of learning and leading in a Big Picture context. Day 2 of the conference was ProjectCon, where two of our students joined from across the WSD to exhibit their learning through projects, and a number of our staff led workshops to build knowledge of project-based and Indigenous pedagogy with teachers in attendance.



A LOOK INSIDE 2025-2026

School Priority Reports

Priority 1: Indigenous Languages, Voices, and Worldviews Lead our Way

- Artist Collective Mentorship Wednesdays created powerful, real-world learning opportunities for Indigenous student voice, leadership, and cultural expression, functioning as a mentorship and social enterprise hub
- students extended their learning beyond the school through community-based mentorship
- Indigenous languages were made visible and meaningful through student led projects
- student impact was evident in increased engagement, confidence, and leadership

Priority 2: The Sacred Wellbeing of our Students

- Connection with community agencies and resources to support wholistic wellbeing of students and families
- New process for welcoming new students and families that is student centered and strength focussed, allowing time and space to connect and build relationships among students, caregivers, and staff.
- Organized a Wellness Day on March 3rd for students and staff called Mino-Bimaadiziwin / Mino-Ayawil. the day started with a smudge and ceremony, and included workshops on buffalo teachings, yoga, medicine teachings, art therapy, indigenous games, traditional parenting, and more.

Priority 3: Meaningful Relationships with Families and Community

- With CEDA, developing guidelines for best use of the CEDA space that honours and serve students in a good way
- New Individual Learning Plans and Portfolio templates were developed and are set to be used school-wide next year and will support caregivers to see students' project work and it's real-world impact



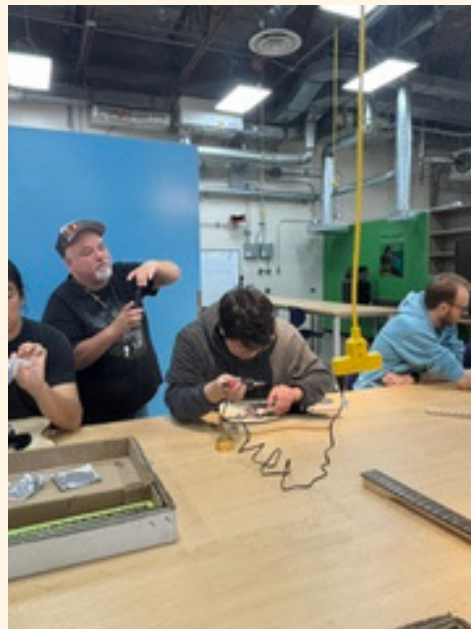
COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

Children of the Earth High School has nurtured partner relationships with a number of community organizations.

Bear Clan: Bear Clan has been an ongoing presence in the school. Kevin and Susan have formed strong connections with our students, in particular the students that chose Bear Clan as an internal internship this year. In this mentorship opportunity, Kevin let the kids lead the way. The relationship that was formed allowed students the comfort and space to explore their interests in guitar, in physical activity, and in planning for the future. The year ended with Bear Clan students having the opportunity to build their own guitars at the Waabishka Makwa design lab.

Community Education Development Association Winnipeg (CEDA): This year saw CEDA SPSWs and CEDA's Community Educator spending a lot of time in our building and with students during the day. Room 211 was consistently a used by students as a place to connect, to gather, to have fun, and to reset before moving on to the next thing. While there has always been a connection between CEDA and Children of the Earth, we have worked intentionally to deepen this partnership, creating opportunities for supporting consistent presence and engagement among our students. We are so excited for our work to continue together!

Neeginan Education, Training, and Employment Services (NETES): NETES generously funded our After School Program, which saw students engaged in cooking, dance, drama, open gym, mindfulness, and sketching activities. We look forward to continuing this partnership for the benefit our our entire community!



CONTACT US



204-589-6383

100 Salter St., Winnipeg, MB R2W 5M1

cote@wsd1.org

<https://www.winnipegssd.ca/childrenoftheearth>

