Residential school students at the Roman Catholic cemetery in Fort George, Québec. Deschâtelets Archives.

the local community, and the missionaries themselves. For example, the cemetery at the Roman Catholic St. Mary's mission, near Mission, British Columbia, was intended originally for priests and nuns from the mission as well as for students from the residential school.[388]

During the influenza pandemic of 1918–19, many of the schools and missions were overwhelmed. At the Fort St. James school and mission in British Columbia, the dead were buried in a common grave.[389] At the Red Deer school, four students who died there were buried two to a grave to save costs.[390] In some cases, student and staff graves were treated differently. At the Spanish, Ontario, school, the graves of staff members were marked with headstones that, in the case of former priests and nuns, provided name and date of birth and death. The burial spots of students were identified only by plain white crosses.[391]

The general Indian Affairs policy was to hold the schools responsible for burial expenses when a student died at school. The school generally determined the location and nature of that burial.[392] Parental requests to have children's bodies returned home for burial were generally refused as being too costly.[393] In her memoirs, Eleanor Brass recalled how the body of one boy, who hung himself at the File Hills school in the early twentieth century, was buried on the Peepeekisis Reserve, even though his parents lived on the Carlyle Reserve.[394] As late as 1958, Indian Affairs refused to return the body of a boy who had died at a hospital in Edmonton to his northern home community in the Yukon.[395]

The reluctance to pay the cost of sending the bodies of children from residential schools home for burial ceremonies continued into the 1960s. Initially, for example, Indian Affairs was initially unwilling to pay to send the body of twelve-year-old Charlie Wenjack back to his parents' home community in Ogoki, Ontario, in 1966.[396] When Charles Hunter