students that if they attended a Sun Dance that was to be held during the summer, they would be strapped on their return to school.[288] Marilyn Buffalo recalled being told by Hobbema, Alberta, school staff that the Sun Dance was 'devil worship.'[289] One year, Sarah McLeod returned to the Kamloops school with a miniature totem pole that a family member had given her for her birthday. When she proudly showed it to one of the nuns, it was taken from her and thrown out. She was told that it was nothing but devilry.[290]

School officials did not limit their opposition to Aboriginal culture to the classroom. In 1942, Gleichen, Alberta, principal John House became involved in a campaign to have two Blackfoot chiefs deposed, in part because of their support for traditional dance ceremonies.[291] In 1943, F. E. Anfield, the principal of the Alert Bay, British Columbia, school, wrote a letter encouraging former students not to participate in local Potlatches, implying that such ceremonies were based on outdated superstition, and led to impoverishment and family neglect.[292]

Even when it did not directly disparage Aboriginal culture, the curriculum undermined Aboriginal identity. Thaddee Andre, who attended the Sept-Îles, Québec, school in the 1950s, recalled how as a student he wanted "to resemble the white man, then in the meantime, they are trying by all means to strip you of who you are as an Innu. When you are young, you are not aware of what you are losing as a human being."[293]

It was not until the 1960s that attitudes began to change about the place of Aboriginal language and culture in residential schools.[294] Alex Alikashuak said that at the Churchill school, which operated in the 1960s, there were no restrictions on the use of Aboriginal languages. He recalled, "The only time, real time we spoke English was when we were in the classroom, or we're talking to one of the administration staff, and or somebody from town that's not Inuit, but otherwise we, everybody spoke our language."[295] The Canadian Welfare Council's 1967 report on nine Saskatchewan residential schools described "an emphasis on relating course content to the Indian culture" as "imaginative" and a sign of progress in "making the educational experience meaningful for the Indian child."[296] By 1968, the Roman Catholic school in Cardston was incorporating Blackfoot into its educational program.[297] In some schools, Aboriginal teachers were brought in to teach dancing and singing.[298] However, as late as the 1969–70 school year, there were only seven Indian Affairs schools that offered courses in Aboriginal languages or used Aboriginal languages as the language of instruction.[299]

Despite the encouragement that was offered in some schools, and the students' efforts to keep their language alive, the overall impact was language loss. Of her experiences at the Baptist school in Whitehorse and the Anglican school in Carcross, Rose Dorothy Charlie said, "They took my language. They took it right out of my mouth. I never spoke it again."[300] In some cases, the residential school experience led parents to decide not to teach their children an Aboriginal language. Both of Joline Huskey's parents attended residential school in the Northwest Territories. As a result of their experience in the schools,