

*École Shannon Park School*

# NEWSLETTER

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## January 2026

Happy New Year! We hope you had a relaxing, peaceful holiday season. We are excited to welcome our students back to school and get right back into the swing of things. Our Shannon Park team is dedicated to supporting the success and well-being of every student.

We are incredibly proud of all that our students have accomplished so far this school year. There's so much exciting learning ahead, and we can't wait to see the growth and achievements that 2026 will bring for our students and school community!

Just a reminder that school starts promptly at 8:20 am. Being on time helps your child kick off the day on a positive and productive note, and we truly appreciate your help in making that happen!

Wishing you all good health and happiness in 2026!

*Ms. Gourlay and Mme. Hazel*

## Upcoming Dates: [Click here](#) for HRCE 25-26 Calendar

- January 5: First Day back for students
- January 21: P-2/3 Winter Concert @12:30pm
- January 22: HSA & SAC meetings @ 6-8pm School Library
- January 27: Family Literacy Day
- January 29: Home and School Family Event

## January Winter Concert

Shannon Park School will be hosting our rescheduled Winter concert Wednesday, January 21st. Please arrive early to sign in and be seated in the gym for a 12:30pm start. Due to fire regulations and seating capacity, siblings that are in class during this time are not able to join the audience.

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Students from the following classes will be performing:  
P Noiles, P Shubaly, P/1 Dick, P/1 McGrath, 1 Anand,  
1de Larrinaga (Goodbody), 1/2 Stevens, 2 Wall, 2 Dull, 2 McKay, and 2/3 Clements

We ask that you wait until the end of the concert before leaving the gym to avoid disruptions to our performers.

If you are picking up your child after the concert, it is preferable for safe dismissal and less crowding to wait for students outside at the regular 2:10pm dismissal time near the Primary Exit by the Bus Dismissal Parking Lot. If you need to take them earlier, please sign them out in the main office and wait for them to be called down to the office.

## Primary-Grade 2 Universal Screening in Reading

This month, schools will be using *Universal Screening in Reading* for Grade Primary, 1, and 2 students. In the fall, we used this tool with our Grade 1 and Grade 2 students. *This is one of the many ways teachers will assess learning.*

### **What is Universal Screening in Reading?**

It's a short (1–5 minute) activity that helps us see how your child is developing key reading skills. Think of it as a quick check-in on their reading journey, like looking at a map to see where they are and what might help them move forward.

### **Why do we do it?**

The screening helps teachers understand children's strengths and where they may need extra support. This allows us to plan instruction, so students get what they need to succeed in reading.

### **Important to know:**

This is *not* a test. There's no "pass" or "fail." It's a way for teachers to ensure students are supported in their learning.

## HSA and SAC

Our next Home and School Association (HSA) and School Advisory Council (SAC) meetings will be January 22 at 6pm and 7pm in our school library. This is a great opportunity to become involved with our school community. If you are interested or just want to know more about each of these groups, please contact us to let us know; [spes@hrce.ca](mailto:spes@hrce.ca)

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## Power Outage Information for Families

As we move into the winter months, we want to share how decisions are made when a school experiences a power outage.

Our priority is always to keep schools open safely when possible. A power outage does not automatically mean classes are cancelled – even if it happens during the school day. The decision depends on when power is expected to be restored.

Here's what happens:

- When a school loses power, HRCE's Operations Team contacts Nova Scotia Power to gather available details on the cause and an estimated restoration time.
- Once we have this information, we consider:
- Before school starts: Have buses begun their routes? If so, we wait until students arrive before making a decision. If classes are cancelled, elementary families will be contacted before dismissal.
- During the school day: How close is dismissal? What is the temperature in the building? Does the school rely on power for water or septic systems? These factors, among others, help us decide whether to stay open or close. Often, power returns faster than we could safely send students home.

If classes are cancelled:

- HRCE will notify families by email and text.
- Families of elementary students will also receive a phone call before dismissal.

Deciding to close schools during a power outage is never simple, but safety is always our top priority. We understand that cancellations can be inconvenient, and our goal is to keep students learning in class whenever possible. More information about school cancellations for any reason can be found [here](#).



## Learn About the Influenza Vaccine

Fast Facts about the Flu Vaccine ( *On behalf of the Nova Scotia Department of Health and Wellness.*)

- Influenza (the flu) is virus that peaks in transmission in the fall and winter months
- Most people are mildly ill when they contract the flu but sometimes the flu can be serious and require admission to the hospital
- Children under 6 years are at the highest risk of serious complications from the flu
- The flu and RSV can occur at the same time making children more at risk of needing hospitalization
- The flu vaccine is recommended yearly for children 6 months and older to protect against serious complications of the flu

For more information, [click here](#).

## Online Platform Risks From Unplugged Canada

Sharing on behalf of Unplugged Canada

Many digital platforms today, including social media, online gaming and AI chat tools, are designed to keep kids scrolling and engaged, often exposing them to addictive features, adult content, and interactions they may not be developmentally ready to handle.

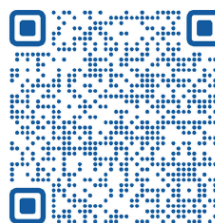
Below is a resource that outlines some of the most common social media, gaming, and AI chat platforms, helping families better understand the risks, start meaningful

## Learn about the Influenza vaccine

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Scan to book



### FLU VACCINE SAFETY

- The flu vaccine cannot cause the flu
- Serious side effects are rare, affecting less than 1 in 1000 people
- Common side effects include pain and swelling at the insertion site



### HOW TO BOOK YOUR VACCINE

- In Nova Scotia, flu vaccines can be booked online and are free of cost
- You can also call to book at 1-833-797-7772. If you or your child does not have a health card, please call rather than booking online














conversations at home, and consider delaying smartphones and access to these apps until kids are more developmentally ready.

You can access the full resource [here](#).

Unplugged Canada is a parent-led, national movement advocating for healthier childhoods by delaying smartphones and social media until kids are more developmentally ready. Join thousands of Canadian families choosing to delay by taking the Unplugged Canada Pledge at [unpluggedcanada.com/sign-pledge](https://unpluggedcanada.com/sign-pledge).

## APPS EVERY PARENT SHOULD BE AWARE OF



 <b>SNAPCHAT</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Disappearing messages</li><li>• Snap Map location sharing</li><li>• Addictive features (streaks)</li><li>• Sexting &amp; adult contact</li></ul>	 <b>INSTAGRAM</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Body-image pressure</li><li>• Hidden DM requests</li><li>• Teens use secret "Finstas"</li><li>• Exposure to adult content</li></ul>
 <b>ROBLOX</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Inappropriate games</li><li>• Unmoderated private servers</li><li>• Chat with strangers</li><li>• Pressure to buy Robux</li></ul>	 <b>TIKTOK</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Highly addictive feed</li><li>• Harmful viral trends</li><li>• Attention fragmentation</li><li>• Frequent adult content</li></ul>
 <b>DISCORD</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• High grooming risk</li><li>• Adult/NSFW content</li><li>• Harassment &amp; cyberbullying</li><li>• Unmoderated servers</li></ul>	 <b>YOUTUBE</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Inappropriate content</li><li>• High risk of grooming</li><li>• Addictive short form content</li><li>• Attention fragmentation</li></ul>
 <b>CHARACTER AI</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Sexualized roleplay bots</li><li>• High grooming-style risk</li><li>• Fake "AI relationships" with kids</li><li>• Encourages secrecy from parents</li></ul>	 <b>TELEGRAM</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Encrypted hidden content</li><li>• Large, risky group chats</li><li>• Minimal moderation</li><li>• Hard for parents to monitor</li></ul>
 <b>REDDIT</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Unfiltered communities</li><li>• Adult/disturbing content</li><li>• Harmful topics easily found</li><li>• Anonymous users &amp; predators</li></ul>	 <b>CHATGPT</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Kids may overshare personal info</li><li>• Mature themes can appear</li><li>• Emotional dependence on AI</li><li>• Hard for parents to monitor use</li></ul>

**Before you let your child use a platform, create an account using their age and explore it yourself to see the content and interactions they'll be exposed to.**

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## Planning for Inclement Weather

Did you know? HRCE takes great care when making the decision to alter the regular operations of schools and school buses in the event of severe or inclement weather.

It is HRCE's goal to communicate any changes to the regular operations of schools and/or buses as close to 6:00 a.m. as possible. A 6:00 a.m. announcement could be:

- All schools are delayed in opening by two hours and bus pickups are delayed by two hours; or
- All schools are open, but some or all busses are not operating for the day; or
- Some schools (either individually or by family) are closed for the day; or
- All schools are closed for the day.



If weather deteriorates, or is forecasted to worsen throughout the morning, an 11:00 a.m. announcement could be:

- Bussed students will be picked up two hours earlier than their regular dismissal time; and
- Walking students will be dismissed at their regularly scheduled lunch hour.

How will I find out?

- By email to the addresses in PowerSchool
- By text message, if you have opted-in. If you aren't sure if you have opted-in, text Y to the following number: 978338
- [On the HRCE website](#)
- [On Instagram](#)

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It's important to always have a plan in place for childcare in the event of any cancellation. Please remember: As a parent or guardian you always have the choice of whether or not to send your child to school.

For more information on how HRCE manages during inclement weather, visit [hrce.ca/families/cancellations](https://hrce.ca/families/cancellations).

## Reminders

- Please, do not send nut or peanut products to school (this includes Nutella products).
- Please note that teachers are on morning duty as of 8:00am. Please do not drop off students before this time. Thank you!
- It is helpful to have a complete change of clothes in your child's backpack just in case of mud, puddles, or spills and it may save you a trip to school in the middle of your day.
- Please do not bring dogs onto school grounds.
- Please do not drive or park on school property. There is absolutely no driving/parking on school property for unauthorized vehicles without prior arrangements during the day. Please drive slowly and watch for crosswalks. *When buses arrive, do not drive, or walk around them.* This protects all of us and especially our students.
- Please request proper forms for the administration of any medications. These need to be completed each school year. Medications can be administered to students by school staff during school hours when we have completed forms on file at school. All medications must be in their original containers; prescription medication with the current pharmacy label attached, and non-prescription medication to include the package documentation for guidance (*Parents/guardians are able to request from their pharmacy a separate labelled medication for school use*).
- Please ensure that your child has indoor shoes for school and wears outdoor shoes/boots to help keep our school clean.