

NEWSLETTER

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February 2026

Dear Shannon Park Families,

This past month, we celebrated music with our Primary to Grade 2/3 Winter Concert. A big thank you to Mr. Tuck for organizing an afternoon of music, to our volunteers for helping to decorate, and to our behind the scenes helpers who help the performances run smoothly. Our Home and School hosted another great community event, Family Movie Night. Thank you for joining us and your donations.

As we move into February, and continue to welcome the winter weather, we remind families to ensure students are dressed warmly for the cold. Proper winter gear is essential for staying safe and comfortable outside. February is also Registration Month; you will see more information about school registration in the newsletter. We will also host our French Immersion information session for parents/guardians.

This year, African Heritage Month embraces the provincial theme, *Strength in Unity: Moving Forward with Purpose, Prosperity, Power, and Progress*. The theme speaks to the power that comes when African Nova Scotians and people of African descent stand together with a shared sense of direction. It recognizes unity as an active force for change that strengthens communities, advances justice, and creates new opportunities. Classes will be learning, recognizing, and celebrating African Heritage Month in a variety of ways.

Sincerely,

Ms. Gourlay and Mme. Hazel

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

- February is African Heritage Month
- February is Registration Month
- February 10: Presentation for Students - African Festival of Arts and Culture Society
- February 12: French Immersion Information Session 6pm
- February 16: Heritage Day-No School
- February 17: Lunar New year
- February 26: Home and School meeting 6pm- School Library
- February 26: School Advisory Council meeting 7pm-School Library
- March 13: Assessment and Evaluation Day-No School for Students
- March 16-20: March Break-No School

February is African Heritage Month



African Heritage Month in Nova Scotia is a time to recognize and celebrate the rich history, vibrant culture, and lasting contributions of people of African descent in our province. This year's theme, "Strength in Unity – Moving Forward with Purpose, Prosperity, Power and Progress," reminds us of the importance of coming together as a community, learning from one another, and moving forward with shared purpose.

In our schools, African Heritage Month provides meaningful opportunities for students to explore African Nova Scotian histories and experiences, deepen their understanding of our shared past, and reflect on the values of respect, inclusion, and belonging. Through classroom learning, discussions, and activities connected to this

year's theme, students are encouraged to appreciate diversity, build empathy, and recognize the strength that comes from unity. These experiences help foster welcoming school communities and inspire students to contribute positively to a more inclusive and equitable future for all.

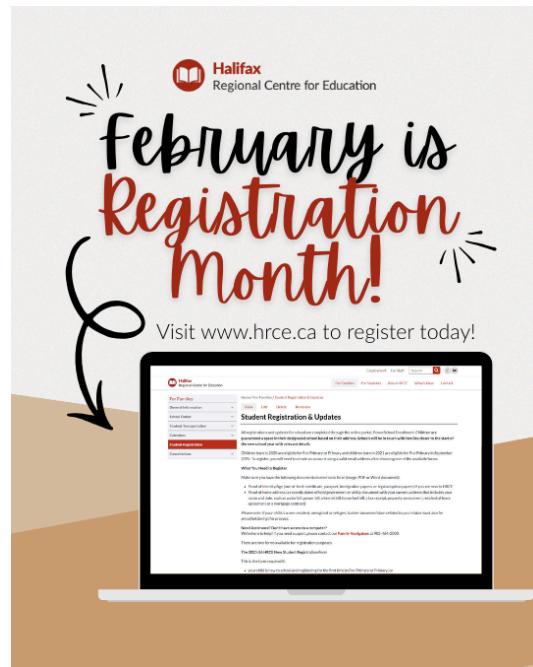
February is Registration Month

Do you have or know a child who will be starting Pre Primary or Primary this fall? It's time to register!

Registration for the 2026-27 school year begins on Monday, February 2. To ensure we have the right staff and supports in place for September, it's important that we gather enrolment numbers now.

Tip: Before you begin, make sure you have the following documents in electronic form (image, PDF or Word document):

- Proof of identity/age with one of the following: birth certificate, passport, immigration papers, or legal adoption papers if you are new to the HRCE
- Proof of home address with one of the following: a recently dated official government or utility document with your current address that includes your name and date, such as water bill, power bill, internet bill, home fuel bill, a tax receipt, property assessment, a mortgage contract or a residential lease agreement



Visit the [HRCE website](#) for more information and to enrol your child today through PowerSchool Enrollment!

Don't have a child to register? Maybe you know someone who does! Please help us spread the word and pass this information on to friends, neighbours or relatives who will be looking to register for the fall.

New Updated School Lunches Are Coming

Starting last week, the school lunch menu is getting a tasty refresh! Expect more fresh fruit, better side pairings, and some exciting new favourites like chicken fingers, quesadillas, egg roll bowls, and meatloaf! New items vary slightly by menu.

Visitors to the school

Visiting the school? Please use the Iroquois Dr. main entrance and report to the office to sign in and get a visitors badge. Please note that visitor tags must be worn at all times during school hours, including on the outdoor playground. Thank you for helping keep our school safe!

HSA and SAC

Our next Home and School Association (HSA) and School Advisory Council (SAC) meetings will be February 26 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

Lost and Found

Lost and Found Items will be donated again before March Break. If your child is missing something, please feel free to come to the main doors, let Ms. Paula or Ms. Amanda, our admin assistants, know you are here, sign in and have a look.

February 16 is Heritage Day

Nova Scotia Heritage Day is celebrated on Monday, February 16, and provides an opportunity for students and families to learn more about the people, stories, and events that have shaped our province. Each year, Heritage Day honours a notable Nova Scotian, and in 2026 we recognize Joseph William Comeau, an important Acadian poet, writer, and cultural leader.

Joseph William Comeau is remembered for his contributions to Acadian literature and for helping to preserve and promote Acadian language, identity, and culture in Nova Scotia. His work reflected the everyday lives, resilience, and traditions of Acadian communities, and his legacy continues to influence Acadian culture today.

Heritage Day provides us with an opportunity to explore Nova Scotia's diverse history and to better understand how individuals from different backgrounds have contributed to our shared story. Learning about Joseph William Comeau helps students appreciate the richness of Acadian heritage and the importance of preserving culture, language, and community.

Thriving Offline: How Delaying Smartphones Can Help Kids Flourish

Thriving Offline: How Delaying Smartphones Can Help Kids Flourish, a free community event hosted by Unplugged Canada at St. Margaret's Bay Elementary, is available both in person and virtually.

Designed for caregivers and educators, this session will explore how early smartphone and social media use impacts children's development and the latest research, practical strategies, safer alternatives, and age-appropriate boundaries to support healthy childhoods.

Join us! Thriving Offline: How Delaying Smartphones Can Help Kids Flourish

- Tuesday, February 24, 2026, at 6:30 p.m.
- St. Margaret's Bay Elementary - 24 Ridgewood Dr, Head of St Margaret's Bay, NS
- Please register for in-person or virtual [here](#).

UPCOMING FREE EVENT!

Thriving Offline:
How Delaying Smartphones Can Help Kids Flourish



When: Tuesday, February 24th @ 6:30pm ADT
Where: St. Margaret's Bay Elementary, NS
(Virtual Zoom option available)
Register: UnpluggedNSThrivingOffline.eventbrite.ca
Connect with other parents in our supportive community!

Two Truths & AI

Two Truths & AI is a free, interactive activity from Common Sense Education that helps students learn how to tell the difference between real and AI-generated content. Through guided examples, students practice asking good questions and thinking critically about what they see online. This resource can also be a helpful way for parents and caregivers to build their own understanding of AI and media literacy alongside their children. Learn more [here](#).

Open your home to an international student!

Have you considered opening your home to an international student?

HRCE's International Services welcomes students from all over the world who would like to attend schools in our region. Hosting a student in your home can be an enriching and rewarding experience. We're looking for warm and caring families like yours to provide them with a home away from home.

Hosting an international student is a once-in-a-lifetime experience that gives your family the opportunity to bring the world home. For students, it's a way to learn about the Canadian way of life.

As a host, your family would be matched with a student who will attend your neighbourhood school and participate in your daily routines.

What you can expect:

- Host families receive a tax-free monthly stipend to help cover hosting expenses (\$825 current, \$875 effective September)
- Students stay for periods of three to 10 months
- Ongoing support is provided by an experienced Homestay Coordinator
- You will learn about and communicate with your student before their arrival

Learn more [here](#) or contact:

HRCE International Services

(902) 464-2000 ext. 2548

hostastudent@hrce.ca

Please share this message with anyone who may be interested.

Thank you! Gracias. Merci. Xie-Xie.
Danke. Arigato. Grazie. Obrigado.
Kamsa-Hamnida. Kawp-Kun-Ka.
Shukran. Teşekkür Ederim.

HRCE International Services



BECOME A HOST FAMILY
OPEN YOUR HOME AND HEART TO AN INTERNATIONAL STUDENT

\$875
/month

PER STUDENT
(Tax Free)

\$975
/month

If you can
accommodate
a vegetarian or
lactose free diet

\$1075
/month

If you can
accommodate
a vegan or
celiac diet

* Effective in September 2025.

RECEIVE \$100 FOR EVERY SUCCESSFUL REFERRAL OF NEW HOST FAMILY

Share the name and contact details of an interested host. Once they are approved and actively hosting, you'll receive \$100.



Halifax
Regional Centre for Education

Learn More:
nsisp.ca/host

Email: hostastudent@hrce.ca
or call 902-464-2000 ext. 2548



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.



What happens when a school loses power?

Learn more at hrce.ca/families/cancellations under *Power Outage Information for Families*

 Halifax
Regional Centre for Education

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](#).

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](#)

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.

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.
- Students are not permitted to use **cell phones** during the school day. If students bring cellphones to school, they must be turned off and in their backpacks for the entire school day.