



Hillside Park Elementary

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Principal: Jacquelyn Reid Vice Principal: Emily Ripley-Davis

Administrative Assistant: Shelley Drake

JANUARY

Dear Hillside Park Families,

Happy New Year! We hope you enjoyed a restful and joyful holiday season. We are excited to welcome our students back to school and begin the new year together with renewed energy and enthusiasm.

Our Hillside Park team is committed to the success and wellbeing of every student, and we are so proud of all that our learners have accomplished so far this year. As we look ahead, we have many engaging learning experiences planned and are eager to see what 2026 brings for our students and our wonderful school community.

A reminder that our instructional day begins promptly at 8:00 AM, and we appreciate your support in ensuring students arrive on time and ready to learn when the bell rings. Consistent attendance and arriving on time helps set a positive tone for learning, supports students in forming strong routines, and allows them to fully engage with teachers and peers from the very beginning

We are excited to welcome Shelley Drake as our new Administrative Assistant! Shelley is looking forward to getting to know our staff, students, and families at Hillside.

Wishing you and your families continued health, happiness, and a wonderful year ahead.

Yours in Education,

Mrs. Reid, Ms. Ripley-Davis and the Hillside Park Team





January 5	First Day Back in 2026
January 6	SAC/PTG Meeting (6:00 PM in the Library)
January 15	Family Movie Night! (6:00 PM in the Gym) Details will be sent soon

Mr. Sutton is Retiring!

Our beloved Physical Education teacher, Terry Sutton, will be retiring at the end of the month. Terry is a remarkable educator who has been a member of the Hillside Park community for many years. He has taught not only our current students, but also many of their parents, leaving a lasting legacy across generations.

Terry brings a heart of gold to everything he does. Through his legendary taste in music and his genuine love for students, he has taught far more than physical education skills. Terry has instilled in our Huskies the importance of sportsmanship, fair play, kindness, and what it takes to be a great teammate and school citizen. We congratulate Terry on an extraordinary career and are so grateful for everything he has given to Hillside Park.

In February, we will welcome Katelyn Daley to the Hillside Park team. Katelyn will be joining us from February through June.



Provincial Student Attendance and Engagement Policy

Did you know? The Student Attendance and Engagement Policy guides our approach to attendance and is in place to support all students. The policy states that regular, punctual attendance supports academic success, responsibility, and preparation for the future.

Ensuring regular attendance is a joint effort between students, families and schools. As a parent/guardian, you play an important role by monitoring attendance, communicating with the school when your child is absent, and supporting your child's regular attendance.

Communication about absences

- Schools will monitor attendance and lateness.
- All absences must be communicated to the school, following the school's procedure.
- If absenteeism or lateness reaches 10% of class time, the school will begin to engage more actively with the student and family.
- If it goes beyond 15%, more targeted supports may be used (counselling, referrals, community supports).



Clothing and Winter Attire

Bundle up! With the cold weather upon us, we would like to remind families and students of the importance of dressing appropriately for the weather including hats, mittens, and snowpants.

As the weather changes we ask that all students pack a change of clothes in the event that their clothing gets wet or dirty/muddy while going outside during recess or lunch.



Support Lilly's Painting

One of our Hillside students, Lilly, has a painting featured in an online art contest, and voting is now open until **January 31st**! If you'd like to support Lilly, simply click the link below, select **Lilly**, and enter your email address to cast your vote. Fingers crossed, and thank you so much for your support!

[Voting Link](#)



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 buses are not operating for the day; or
- Some schools (either individually or by family) are closed for the day. Hillside Park is in the Sackville High Family of Schools
- 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:

- Bused 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 our website www.hrce.ca
- On Instagram at www.instagram.com/hrce_ns/

It's important to always have a plan in place for childcare in the event of any cancellation. For more information on how HRCE manages during inclement weather, visit hrce.ca/weather.



Visit hrce.ca/weather for everything you need to know about how weather could impact the operation of our school.

 **Halifax**
Regional Centre for Education

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](#).



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 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.

APPS EVERY PARENT SHOULD BE AWARE OF



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

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.