



# Hillside Park Elementary

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Vice Principal: Emily Ripley-Davis

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february

Dear Hillside Park Families,

Happy February! It's hard to believe we're already cruising past the halfway point of the school year. This month, we're proud to celebrate African Heritage Month by exploring history, culture, and contributions through art, dance, and lived stories that highlight resilience and excellence.

A huge thank-you to everyone who joined us for Family Movie Night. It was wonderful to see our school community come together. And wow! Olympic Day was nothing short of amazing! From teamwork, school spirit, and friendly competition, our students truly embodied the Olympic values **and** our Hillside values all in one unforgettable day.



To keep the fun going, we're wrapping up the month with our Family Glow Stick Dance on February 12th. Get ready to light up the night and show off your best moves!

Students are welcome to exchange Valentine's Day cards on Friday, February 13th. Teachers will provide their classes with some treats! It's also Red, White and Pink Day. Dress in style as we celebrate kindness and friendship here at Hillside Park!

Yours in Education,

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





February 3	SAC/PTG Meeting 6:00 PM (virtual; link will be emailed)
February 6	Pajama Day! (Coins for Books)
February 9	Africa Festival of Arts and Culture Performance
February 9-13	Lockdown Drill (see below for details)
February 12	Hillside Family Dance! Glow Stick Theme! (6:00-7:00 PM)
February 13	Wear pink, red & white (Coins for Books)
February 16	Nova Scotia Heritage Day (no classes)
February 17	Lunar New Year
February 18	Mother Language Day Celebration!
February 21	Bring Your Favourite Book & Stuffie (Coins for Books)
February 26	Breakfast & Books
February 27	Hawaiian Beach Party Day (Coins for Books) Matt the Music Man Performance

## Lockdown Drill

The safety and security of our students and staff is a top priority for Hillside Park Elementary School and the Halifax Regional Centre for Education. During a lockdown drill, classroom doors are secured and the students remain inside the room until instructed by the teacher to resume their activities. All exterior doors are locked and no one is permitted to enter or leave the building. Students are kept inside the school and classrooms when circumstances make it safer to stay in the classroom rather than evacuate.

We practice these drills to ensure our school remains a safe place for teaching and learning. Our next lockdown drill will be during the week of **February 9-13**.

# 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.



We are excited to be participating in the Tattletales Annual Coins for Books again this year! Tattletales is a locally owned bookstore in Dartmouth, and for the past 19 years they have run an amazing campaign to help schools raise money for classroom books.

Last year our small but mighty school raised the **MOST** money out of over 100 participating schools. It just goes to show what Hillside Park is made of!

Students are encouraged to bring in coins throughout the month of February as we celebrate all things books! To add some excitement to the campaign, we thought we would brighten our month with some February Spirit Days:

- ★ Friday, February 6- Pajama Day
- ★ Friday, February 3- Red, Pink & White Day to celebrate Valentine's Day!
- ★ Friday, February 20- Bring Your Favourite Book and Stuff
- ★ Friday, February 27- Hawaiian Beach Party (think bright colours, sunglasses, anything that puts you in the Aloha spirit!)

# 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](https://hrce.ca) 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.



## 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).



# Nova Scotia 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 24<sup>th</sup> @ 6:30pm ADT  
**Where:** St. Margaret's Bay Elementary, NS  
(Virtual Zoom option available)  
**Register:** [UnpluggedNSThrivingOffline.eventbrite.ca](https://unpluggednsthrivingoffline.eventbrite.ca)  
*Connect with other parents in our supportive community!*

# 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](http://www.hrce.ca)
- On Instagram at [www.instagram.com/hrce\\_ns/](https://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](http://hrce.ca/weather).





# 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](#).

