



# Hillside Park Elementary

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Principal: Jacquelyn Reid Acting Vice Principal: Erin Dunn

Administrative Assistant: Shelley Drake



Dear Hillside Park Families,

Although February was the shortest month of the year, it was certainly full. We were proud to recognize African Heritage Month by exploring and celebrating the culture, legacy, achievements, and contributions of people of African ancestry. We welcomed the *Africa Festival of Arts and Culture Society* for a vibrant and joyful experience complete with storytelling, music and dancing. We also enjoyed music and movement with *Matt the Music Man*, rocked Coins for Books for the fourth year in a row, and held our school-wide Breakfast & Books!

Our students have also been busy with hands-on learning beyond the classroom. A big thank you to Ms. Cawthra for leading terrarium-building with our upper classes; such a rich and engaging science experience! Ms. Cawthra also organized Science Club for our students, providing additional opportunities for curiosity and discovery.

We would like to extend our warmest wishes to Ms. Ripley-Davis as she begins her maternity leave and prepares to welcome her new baby. We are so grateful for her leadership and dedication. We are excited to welcome Erin Dunn into the role of Acting Vice Principal during this time and know she will be a wonderful support to our students, staff, and families. We are also excited to let you know that Haley Boutilier will be our new Music educator!

We hope all of our families enjoy a safe, restful, and well-deserved March Break. As always, please reach out if you need anything. We are grateful for your continued partnership.

Yours in Education,

Mrs. Reid, Ms. Dunn and the Hillside Park Team



Date	Event
March 9-13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Mrs. Reid away (Retired Principal Ms. Bond will be in to support Ms. Dunn)</li></ul>
March 13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Assessment and Evaluation Day (no school for students)</li></ul>
March 16-20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• March Break- no classes</li></ul>
March 30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Report Cards sent home via email</li></ul>
April 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Family/Teacher Conferences (5:30-7:30 PM)</li></ul>
April 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Professional Practice AM &amp; Family/Teacher Conferences (12:30-2:30 PM)</li><li>• No school for students</li></ul>
April 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Good Friday (no school)</li></ul>
April 6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Easter Monday (no school)</li></ul>



Thank you Hillside!!

Once again, your generosity throughout our *Campaign for Books* has been nothing short of inspiring. Over the past month, students embraced a little friendly competition and worked together to raise an incredible **\$4332.18!**

A special congratulations to Ms. Bond's Primary/1 class for finishing as our top fundraising group- what an amazing effort! An amazing shout-out goes to Ms. Brilhante's 3/4 class (2nd place), and Ms. Cawthra's 4/5 class (3rd place)!!

Thanks to this outstanding total, we will be able to add many beautiful new books to our classroom libraries, putting fresh, engaging stories directly into the hands of our students. Your support helps us nurture a true love of reading at Hillside Park, and we are so grateful for the difference you continue to make.

# Breakfast & Books

What a way to start the day! Last week our whole school from Pre-Primary to Grade 5 students enjoyed healthy, delicious breakfasts made by their classmates. A huge shoutout to Ms. Nicole for helping students choose their menus and guiding them in preparing the meals. With tummies full and energy high, students were ready to learn, explore, and grow. Plus, some lucky readers got to take home books to kick off their day of learning; the perfect recipe for a bright start!

## March is Nutrition Month

March is celebrated across Canada as Nutrition Month, a perfect opportunity for families to focus on building healthy eating habits together. Nutrition Month allows us to explore sustainable eating patterns, food literacy, and learning about the benefits of balance and variety in everyday meals. By highlighting the connection between nutrition and long-term health, Nutrition Month empowers everyone to build habits that benefit both individuals and the planet.

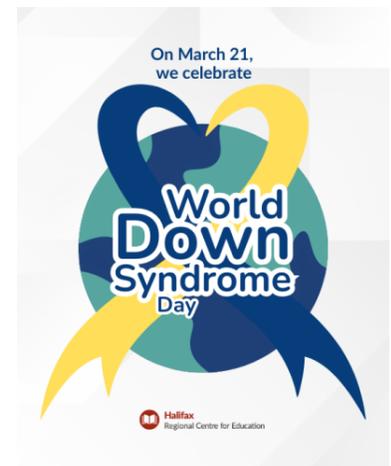
Use Nutrition Month as a reminder to take advantage of the [Nova Scotia School Lunch Program](#)! With nutritious, balanced meals prepared daily, the program ensures students have the energy and focus they need to succeed in the classroom and beyond. The School Lunch Program is designed to provide accessible, affordable, and appealing meals that feature a variety of foods from all food groups, following Canada's Food Guide. By participating, families can help their children develop lifelong healthy habits while making mornings a little less hectic. Together, we can make small changes that lead to healthier futures for our families and communities.



## March 21 is World Down Syndrome Day

World Down Syndrome Day, celebrated each year on March 21, gives us the chance to recognize those with Down syndrome and the awesome contributions they make to our school communities. It's an opportunity for families, students, and staff to strengthen inclusion, acceptance, and belonging. By celebrating differences and promoting understanding, our schools help create welcoming environments where every child feels valued and supported.

On this day, many schools encourage students and staff to wear mismatched socks as a colourful symbol of diversity and solidarity. Activities such as assemblies, classroom discussions, and creative projects highlight the abilities of individuals with Down syndrome, fostering empathy and friendship throughout the school. These efforts ensure that everyone has a voice and a place in our communities, reinforcing the importance of respect and kindness.



## Muddy Weather is Upon Us!

Please pack an extra set of clothes for your child as the grounds are thawing and muddy... well technically they're snowy and icy, but fingers crossed we get thaw and mud soon! Socks and pants are the most popular requests this time of year :)



## 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).



## Responding to Technology-Facilitated Harms

Unplugged Canada is hosting a free community event at the Canada Games Centre on Thursday March 5 at 7 p.m., available both in person and virtually. Join to learn from Dr. Alexa Dodge, Assistant Professor of Criminology at Saint Mary's University and a leading Canadian researcher on technology-facilitated sexual violence.

This session will explore cyberbullying, the sharing of intimate images, and other online harms youth face, along with research on the support and responses young people need when problems arise online. This presentation will be valuable for any caregiver or adult supporting young people as they navigate the challenges of their digital social lives.

Thursday, March 5, 2026, at 7 p.m.

Canada Games Centre Boardroom - 26 Thomas Raddall Drive, Halifax

Please register for in-person or virtual [here](#).

# 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](#).

