

# Hillside Park Elementary School

Handbook for Families



2023-2024

## **PRINCIPAL'S MESSAGE**

Welcome to the 2023-2024 school year! A very special welcome to all returning families, and those who are new to our community. We have put together a handbook that explains some of our procedures, policies, and school information. Each month we will also send families a newsletter with upcoming dates, important information, and of course highlights from our school!

Hillside Park is a vibrant community school with a dedicated staff, amazing students, and supportive families. We are looking forward to getting to know you all, and partnering with you this year.

Yours in Education,  
Mrs. Jacquelyn Reid and Ms. Emily Ripley-Davis

Principal – Mrs. Reid  
Vice Principal – Ms. Ripley-Davis  
Administrative Assistant – Ms. Sheldon

### **Address and Telephone Numbers**

15 Hillside Avenue  
Lower Sackville, NS B4C 1W6

### **Phone Numbers**

Main Office.....(902) 864-6873  
Safe Arrival.....1-833-582-6940  
Fax.....(902) 864-6878

### **Email Address**

hpes@hrce.ca

### **Website**

[hpe.hrce.ca](http://hpe.hrce.ca)

### **Twitter**

@HillsidePark1

### **Staff Directory**

The school's website contains a current list of all staff, their assignments, email, website and Twitter (for those utilizing these).

### **Bell Schedule**

Enter School	7:45
Classes begin	8:00
Recess	9:50-10:05
<b>Lunch</b>	<b>11:05-12:05</b>
Dismissal	2:10

### **Safe Arrival**

One of our greatest priorities is ensuring that all our

students arrive safely at school each day. You are able to report future absences using an app, website, or toll-free phone number.

If a student is going to be absent from school for any reason, you have 3 options to report the absence:

- 1) Call Safe Arrival toll free at: 1-833-582-6940
- 2) Report via [SchoolMessenger](#)
- 3) Download the SchoolMessenger app for Android and iOS devices and use your username and password for the PowerSchool Portal.

All three methods are available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Up to five consecutive absences can be recorded at once. If your student is absent and the absence has not been reported in advance, you will receive notifications via email, text, and phone calls from SchoolMessenger. If SchoolMessenger cannot reach you, office staff will follow up. Please make sure you contact Safe Arrival before 8:00 am as teachers will be completing their attendance at that time.

*Children arriving late must sign in at the office.*

### **Communication**

Hillside Park Elementary values and recognizes the important role strong communication plays in setting our students up for success. Our plan for Communicating School Learning can be found in detail on our school website.

The school will communicate through monthly newsletters, emails, and phone calls which are sent home through the PowerSchool Alert system. You are encouraged to keep updated phone numbers and emails through the school office. Access for PowerSchool for Parents can be obtained by contacting the school.

### **Student Attendance**

Regular school attendance supports greater school success and achievement. **It is important that children are in school and on time.**

### **Student Supervision**

Morning supervision by teachers begins at 7:45 and students are to come directly into the school. Please do not drop off or have children arrive before this time. Teachers provide supervision during recess. Lunch supervision is provided by paid and volunteer lunch monitors.

### **Early Departures**

Parents/guardians who come to the school to pick up their child before the dismissal time must first buzz the

school upon arrival. **No child should leave the school without first informing the office.** We will walk them to the door to meet you.

### **Emergency Closure of Schools**

The Halifax Regional Centre for Education takes great care when making the decision to alter the normal operations of schools in the event of severe or inclement weather. Decisions on school closures and/or bus cancellations are posted:

- On the [HRCE website](#)
- On [HRCE Twitter](#) account
- Recorded on 902-464-INFO (4636)
- Communicated to all local radio stations.

You can also receive notice of school and bus cancellations by email or text message by signing up for notifications [here](#). If you are interested in learning more on how decisions regarding closures and cancellations are made, visit [this link](#).

In the event of midday cancellation, all parents or designates will be contacted directly by phone before students are dismissed from school. Please review the instructions you supplied to the school for your child in the event of a midday school cancellation.

In the event of a 2 hour delayed opening, our instructional day would begin at 10:00 am. If bus transportation is operating, morning buses would pick students up 2 hours later than their regularly assigned time pending any other local weather delays. Lunch, afternoon and dismissal times will remain at the regularly scheduled times. Hillside Park is in the Sackville High Family of Schools.

### **Lunch**

All students are permitted to stay for lunch each day. The students eat in their classrooms. They are supervised by lunch monitors. Families have the option of having their children go home for lunch. If this is not the norm for your child please send a note to your child's teacher.

### **Medications at School**

Students requiring medications at school must have proper documentation on file in the school office. Forms must be completed on a yearly basis so we have current information in the office. Over the counter drugs must also follow this procedure. All medication is kept in a secure location in the office and is given to the student by appropriate school personnel when required.

Prescribed medication should be provided to the school in the original container dispensed by the pharmacy that is labelled with the student's name, the name of the

drug, the prescribed dose, the administration time/schedule, and the route the medication is to be administered, the expiry date, and the storage information. Your pharmacist will do this when requested.

### **Peanut/Nut Smart School**

All of our classrooms are "peanut/nut smart" for the safety of some of our students. We have students who have life-threatening reactions to such products. We ask parents not to include these products in student snacks and lunches.

### **No Scents Please**

There are some students and staff in our building who are extremely sensitive to scented products (perfumes, colognes, etc.) and chemical sprays. When visiting, volunteering, or working in our school, *please do not wear scented products.*

### **Life Threatening Allergies**

Students who have been diagnosed with Life Threatening allergies must complete documentation every September. The school is responsible for increasing awareness and posting signs of allergens-providing parents with the criteria for documentation and informing all staff and volunteers of the student's information. Parents/Guardians are expected to complete the necessary paperwork, provide the child with an epi-pen, and encourage them to wear a Medic Alert bracelet (see website). More information is included in the HRCE policy C.012

### **Students Ill in School**

If your child has been ill the night before or in the morning and cannot participate in regular school activities, including playing outside at recess and lunch, please keep your child home. **Follow public health protocols.**

### **School Code Of Conduct**

A positive, safe and caring environment is necessary in order for students to learn. Students, parents, teachers, support staff, principals, and school centres for education share responsibility for creating a school-wide approach to maintaining a positive and inclusive school climate where all students are supported to develop healthy relationships, make good choices, and achieve success in their learning. All members of Nova Scotia's school communities have a role to play in the awareness and prevention of unacceptable behaviour.

The [Provincial School Code of Conduct policy](#) applies to all public schools and centres for education in the Province of Nova Scotia. All students and school members in Nova Scotia are required to follow this provincial school code of conduct policy, which is governed by the Education Act. The Provincial Code of Conduct outlines expectations for establishing safe and

inclusive learning environments and identifies roles and responsibilities of the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, centres for education, and schools. Additionally, this policy outlines acceptable standards of behaviour and ways to promote acceptable behaviours. The EECD also identifies how unacceptable behaviours will be addressed and responses specifically forbidden.

Using the Caring School Community Program classes develop age appropriate norms about how they will treat each other. The Caring Schools Community program builds classroom and schoolwide community while developing students' social and emotional (SEL) skills and competencies.

### School Safety

The safety of your children is a top priority at Hillside Park. We practice a number of safety drills throughout the year. These include a minimum of 6 Fire drills, 1 Hold and Secure Drill (classroom doors are locked and classes continue working but no entrance to the hallways or into and out of the building) and Lockdowns (classroom doors are locked and children are kept quiet in a designated position within the class). In case of evacuation from our school, AJ Smeltzer and Caudle Park are our relocation sites.

It's important to all that our children feel safe both in and outside our school. For this reason, we ask that **dogs not come onto our school property during school hours and dismissal times, as even gentle dogs can cause anxiousness and feelings of discomfort for some children.** Your cooperation is very much appreciated.

### School Programs

All classroom programs are based on the Public School Program.

### Curriculum

All Public Schools follow the curriculum as laid out by the Education and Early Childhood Development (EECD). They can be accessed [here](#) and include an integrated approach. The curriculum is the cornerstone of education. It sets the standards for what teachers teach and what students learn. The Integrated Curriculum is specifically focused on improving the two most important fundamentals in education: math and literacy.

### **What can integration look like in Language Arts?**

During integrated language arts time teachers will explicitly instruct students in language arts outcomes. Teachers will continue to use effective instructional strategies such as reading and writing workshops. Other subject area outcomes (Health, ICT, Science, Social Studies, and Visual Arts) will be integrated into the

learning opportunities planned for and provided to students.

### **What can integration look like in Mathematics?**

During integrated mathematics time teachers will explicitly instruct students in mathematics outcomes. Teachers will continue to use effective strategies such as direct and guided instruction and discovery lessons. Other subject area outcomes (Health, ICT, Science, Social Studies, and Visual Arts) will be integrated into the learning opportunities planned for and provided to students.

### **Provincial Homework Policy (Grades P-12):**

The Provincial Homework Policy was developed in 2015. Homework can help students develop academically and personally when the work is carefully planned, directly connected to classroom learning, meaningful to students, and appropriate for a student's age and stage of development.

### **The purpose of homework will vary by grade and subject:**

Homework assigned in grades primary-5 will:

- enhance student learning of foundational skills in reading and math (e.g., reading for pleasure, educational games)
- gradually introduce time to practice or apply learning in other subject areas
- promote healthy growth and development (e.g., practicing physical skills, interviewing family members)

Homework can be a wonderful opportunity to talk to your child about what's happening at school, and to see what your child can do on his or her own. Homework can help children to review and practice what they have learned in class. It can also develop self-confidence and allow the child to be an independent learner.

Families can help with homework by:

- Finding out class and school expectations
- Creating a time and space to do homework
- Showing interest
- Providing positive feedback
- Contacting the teacher with concern

### **School Advisory Council**

School Advisory Councils are volunteer organizations that were established by the Nova Scotia Education Act. The duties of School Advisory Councils are embedded in the Act and as a legislated body, receive their authority under the Act. They were established to provide parents, staff, community members, and where appropriate, students, with a voice that will influence school decisions that impact on student learning. School Advisory Councils bring partners together to provide

advice to principals and to school boards, in the best interests of students.

### **Parent & Teacher Group**

Hillside Park Parent & Teacher Group (PTG) is a volunteer, non-profit organization of families, teachers, and school staff who are committed to supporting and assisting quality educational programs at Hillside Park School. **Membership is open to any interested parent/guardian or staff member, and we welcome you to join at any time!** The primary function of the PTG is to raise funds for extra programming (special performances, support for school clubs, etc) and teacher support (including class field trips).

### **Volunteers**

Volunteers are valued and respected at Hillside Park for the role they play in enhancing the educational experiences for our students. Please see the website and monthly newsletters for the many ways you can volunteer at the school. When working directly with children in such areas as chaperoning on class trips, coaching, or helping in the Breakfast Program it is necessary to complete a Criminal Record check including a Vulnerable Sector Check and Child Abuse Registry Search on file in the school office.

### **Traffic in the School Area**

As we begin our school year, we'd like to remind you of how you can help keep our students safe as they arrive and leave our school grounds:

- ★ Please do not park in the no stopping zone at drop off/pick up. This creates a safety issue for the buses and for the walkers as the bus cannot make the turn. Please drop off on the school side of the street. RCMP regularly monitor this.
- ★ Students and families should only walk up the hill to our school via the second driveway. This means that when facing the school from Hillside Drive families would walk up the driveway on the left of the building. This is not the driveway closest to the blue wall or main entry door. This is the driveway that staff monitors to ensure students and buses are safe.
- ★ For the safety of students, please remember to park on the street and DO NOT drive up into the parking lot. Please keep the driveway and areas near the driveway clear for the buses to get in and out safely.

### **Lost and Found**

Families are encouraged to label their children's clothing and personal items as there can be more than one of a particular item in a class

## **Head Lice in Schools: Guidelines for Parents and Guardians**

The Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (EECD), in partnership with regional centres for education (RCEs) and the Conseil Scolaire Acadien Provincial (CSAP), has committed to following the recommendations of health care professionals and supporting school communities in the treatment and prevention of head lice. The department's focus on the treatment and prevention of head lice is an effort to support student attendance and full participation at school. In accordance with these principles and healthcare standards, students with head lice should be treated at home and continue to attend school as usual. The confidentiality, privacy, dignity, and best interests of students and their families will be respected at all times.

“No-nit” or “no head lice” policies that keep children away from school are not effective. Head lice are common among students: they do not spread disease and cases of head lice are often misdiagnosed. A school-wide notice will be sent home to all parents/guardians when school staff suspect a case of head lice.

## **What Are Head Lice?**

Head lice are tiny insects and parasites that live on the human body and are most often attached to clean hair. Their eggs, also called nits, stick to the hair shaft, very close to the scalp. Head lice are spread most easily through direct head-to-head contact or through personal items used on the head or in the hair (e.g., hats, combs, brushes, ponytail holders).

EECD recognizes that the discovery of head lice on your child(ren) can result in your family feeling discomfort and embarrassment. Head lice are a common condition that can affect anyone.

## **Treatment and Prevention**

Nova Scotia Public Health recommends two head lice treatments (visit the link at the end of these guidelines for more information) to completely break the head lice cycle. The second treatment should be used 7 to 10 days after the first or as directed by the product.

The first treatment kills live head lice. Some lice may hatch after it but they are adolescent nits and cannot lay eggs. Combing your child(ren)'s hair and removing nits is a daily requirement. The second treatment kills the adolescent nits and breaks the head lice cycle.

### **Please note, the following guidelines are helpful in preventing the spread of head lice:**

- ★ Notify your principal and your child(ren)'s classroom teacher if your child(ren) has or have head lice and keep the school informed about head lice issues as they arise.
- ★ Check your child(ren)'s head(s) and hair regularly, including: once a week as part of your routine, after every sleepover, any time they have had contact with someone with lice
- ★ Keep long hair tied back or braided. Teach your child(ren) not to share personal items that have touched their head, such as brushes, combs, barrettes, headbands, hair elastics, towels, hats, helmets, toques, scarves, pencils, crayons
- ★ Teach your child(ren) to put their hats and scarves in their coat sleeves or backpacks when they take them off

## **Assistance in Treating Head Lice**

Parents/guardians who are experiencing difficulties in addressing head lice issues at home should notify their child(ren)'s principal(s) of the situation. Principals may assist families in accessing the specific supports that they require, such as additional information and means of obtaining head lice treatments. The confidentiality, privacy, dignity, and best interests of students and their families will be respected at all times.

Additional information on how to prevent, find, and treat head lice is available at

<https://www.novascotia.ca/dhw/publications/public-health-education/07135-head-lice-pamphlet-en.pdf>