



Hillside Park Elementary

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Welcome to new and returning families of Hillside Park Elementary! It has been a very busy few months and as we all get back into our new routines we are very excited to get the new school year started! We will be sending home regular communication via email between now and the first day of school on September 8th. Please check regularly.

First of all I'd like to introduce you to some new staff at Hillside. We have a new Vice Principal at Hillside Ms. Courtney Smith and a new Administrative Assistant Mrs. Carol Sheldon. Mrs. Myra is now working as a Principal at another school in the HRCE and Mrs. Brown has retired.

There have been (and continue to be) many questions around school procedure and protocols this year. As Mr. Leroux stated in his email last week, HRCE will continue to share system and provincial updates. This will include any updates or changes to the Public Health Guidelines.

At the school level, we are working towards solutions that will ensure a safe and successful school year. As our plans are finalized with specific routines, we will continue to share them with you. Flexibility is the key for a successful school year.

Below, you will find answers to some of the questions of which we are all thinking. Please understand that some of the answers may need to change, and we will update you as quickly as possible when/if this happens. As well, www.hrce.ca is always a valid source of information, as well as the Back To School Plan document released by the Nova Scotia Department of Education and Early Childhood Education (see attached). If you have specific questions, please feel free to contact us directly. **Hillside Park does not have any affiliation or contribution to information on any community social media platforms/groups other than our school website - hpe.hrce.ca and twitter - @HillsidePark1.**

Enjoy your final days of summer and keep checking your email for more information!

Kelly Joy, Principal and Courtney Smith, Vice Principal

Important Dates

August 26

Late Registration Day

September 3

Teachers back to school

September 4

Professional Development Day

September 8

First day of school!

Frequently Asked Questions

Does my child need to wear a mask?

- Public health and the EECD have decided that all students who travel on school buses must wear a mask to and from school. Students in grades 4 and 5 and all staff will be required to wear masks while at school. If your child is in the 3/4 classroom they too will have to wear a mask.

My child will be taking the bus. What do I need to know before the first day?

- Please log onto MyBusPlanner (link found on HRCE website) to confirm pick up and drop of times and locations.
- **All** students (regardless of age) riding the school bus are required to wear non-medical masks both to and from school.
- While riding school buses, children and students from the same household must sit together.

What does the first day of school drop off look like?

- Things are going to look differently this year, especially on the **first day** of school. Our opening day plan, at this time, is as follows.
 - All students in Grades PP-5 will be coming inside the building upon arriving at school. Please do not come before 7:45 am. Because we cannot have groups over 200 people congregating together, unfortunately parents of students in Grades 1-5 cannot accompany their child onto the school property on the first day. Please give your hugs and kisses when you drop them off either in your car or on the sidewalk. We ask all families to follow the provincially mandated social distancing guidelines during this time.
 - Grade Primary students will be met at the red door on the left hand side of the school (facing the school). We all understand how daunting first day can be for Grade Primary students (and their families). Family members must remain outside. Remember that your children will take their cues from you, so please stay positive about this exciting day!
 - Pre-Primary students will be met by Pre-Primary staff at the main doors of the school. Please do not arrive to drop off Pre-Primary students until 7:45 am. There is no sign in this year. Staff will be keeping track at drop off for Pre Primary students.

What does school drop off look like after the first day?

- All students will arrive at school no earlier than 7:45am (when teacher supervision begins). They will immediately enter the school via designated doors as they arrive, heading directly to their classrooms. Please note that provincially mandated social distancing guidelines need to be regarded when dropping students off. There is no outside play before the school day begins.

What will after school dismissal look like?

- All students will be dismissed from their designated exit doors and accompanied by their teacher. If you are waiting for your child at the end of the day, please ensure social distancing guidelines are being followed. It is important that all parents/guardians are present for dismissal time when the bell rings as there is no supervision of students after the bell and students cannot remain in the building.

What doors should my child enter/exit?

- All doors on the school will have signage posted starting on September 3rd stating in which classes enter and exit.

Where do we find information regarding the Excel program?

- Any questions regarding the Excel program can be answered by the Excel team at the HRCE offices. Please visit www.hrce.ca to find contact information.

Will there still be a breakfast program?

- Yes, there will continue to be breakfast program this year. Classrooms will have a supply of non-perishable, individually packaged breakfast foods for students to access when necessary. Breakfast program begins the week of Sept 14th.

How will recess work?

- Each classroom will be assigned a designated playground during recess. Students will only be socializing outside with their classroom bubble. Because we will be restricting the number of students on playgrounds, recess times will be staggered to accommodate all classes.

Should my child bring a water bottle to school?

- Yes! Please send **a full water bottle** with your child each day. They will be bringing them home at the end of the day. This is to help reduce the spread of germs at our water filling stations.

Does my child need to bring lunch?

- If your child is staying for lunch, they must bring one with them each morning. We cannot have visitors dropping into the school daily to bring lunch for their child. Students will be bringing home any unfinished lunch items in their lunch bags, please make sure to check them daily.

How will lunch work?

- Lunch will still run from 11:05 - 12:05. Some classes will eat lunch in their classrooms for the first half hour and then have free time (outside if weather permits). The other classes will have free time (outside if weather permits) for the first half hour and then return to their classrooms to eat. When outside, all classes will have designated play areas in which they must remain.

Will there be hot lunch programs this year?

- In order to reduce risk as much as possible we will not be having any hot lunch, canteen or milk programs available this year.

Will the school be doing Covid-19 screening daily?

- No, the school will not be doing individual daily screening. It is expected that families will be monitoring their child's own health and using the Nova Scotia Public Health Covid-19 Daily Checklist (see attached).

The school supply list is brief... is this all they need?

- We recognize that Covid-19 has taken an economic toll on many families. Therefore, the school, along with some support from PTG funds, has decided the school will purchase additional items they require to deliver curriculum this year. *All students will require indoor shoes.*

Are parents/guardians allowed in the school?

- Public Health has guided us in developing our back to school plans based on the number of people required to be in the building. In the Back to School Plan delivered by the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, it states, *"Schools will limit outside visitors, including parents/guardians. Drop offs and pickups will be done outside, and people will not be allowed to congregate in groups outside the school, as per the COVID-19 Public Health Guidance for Schools. Use of schools after hours by other organizations will be limited."* Please ensure that when your child leaves for school in the morning, they have all of their belongings (and lunch) for the day. In the rare case that something does need to be dropped off, please call the school office and we will make arrangements to retrieve the items from you as soon as possible. School doors will be locked to visitors throughout the day.

Who will be my child's teacher this year?

- Class lists are being finalized over the coming days. Teachers will be reaching out and making contact personally to all their students' families before the first day of school on September 8th.

What if I forget my child's mask?

- There will be disposable masks available at the school if your child has forgotten his/her mask. Please note that masks are required for all students on all public transportation, including school busses to and from school.

What happens if my child displays symptoms while at school?

- If your child displays symptoms of Covid-19 while at school, they will be required to be picked up. Students who display symptoms will pack up their belongings in the classroom and wait in a designated isolation area. Parents will be contacted first (please ensure all contact information is up to date on file). If parents cannot be reached, we will immediately proceed to the emergency contacts on file. It is imperative that families develop a plan for a safe and timely pick up for their children.

Is my contact information up to date?

- It is extremely important that all contact information is up to date with our school system. We require that all parent/guardian information is reliable. We also require that all students have emergency contact information for additional adults who may pick students up at school, in the case that students are required to go home. Please make arrangements with family members, neighbours, or friends and share these arrangements with your children so that

everyone is aware of who may pick up your child in the case that they are required to go home mid day.

Will there be a Curriculum Night this year?

- Due to public health guidelines and restrictions, there will not be a Curriculum Night during the 2020-2021 school year. All communication will be distributed from the school electronically during this time. Please make sure that all personal information is up to date. If you have specific questions about your child's education, please contact their teacher.

Are we looking to hire lunch monitors?

- As always, we are looking for new team members. If you are interested in becoming a lunch monitor, please contact the school and have a conversation with Mrs. Joy or Ms. Smith.

How can I help prepare my child for school during this unusual time?

- You can help your child prepare for school during this time by doing the following things:
 - Learning how to safely put a mask on, and take a mask off.
 - Teaching your child how to safely and appropriately wash their hands and use hand sanitizer.
 - Take time over the next two weeks to practice school routines with your child - pack their lunches and school bags, visit the school to see where they will be dropped off and what doors they will be using.
 - Getting into the routine of unpacking and packing all of their belongings in their book bags and lunch bags.
 - Demonstrating social distancing in public spaces.
 - Emphasize that sharing is not caring in school during this time. We cannot share food, school supplies, or other belongings.
 - Remind students that personal belongings and toys belong at home. We will not be taking any unnecessary items to school this year.
 - Carving out time each day to have your child/children practice wearing a mask for an extended period of time.
 - Discussing the ways in which school may be different, preparing them for these changes, and identifying why these changes are important for keeping our whole school community safe.
 - Stay positive about the start of a new year. Remember - what emotions you display, they will pick up on!

I have additional questions. Where can I get answers?

- www.hrce.ca is always a valid source of information, as well as the Back To School Plan document released by the Nova Scotia Department of Education and Early Childhood Elementary (see attached).
- We have access to the most up to date and accurate information available. If you have specific questions, please feel free to contact me directly at hpes@hrce.ca. **Hillside Park does not have any affiliation or contribution to information on any community social media platforms/groups other than our school website - www.hpe.hrce.ca and twitter - @HillsidePark1.** We cannot guarantee the accuracy of information found on any other platforms.