

Admiral Westphal Elementary School

NEWSLETTER

JANUARY 2026

Hello AWES Families...

Welcome Back! We hope you enjoyed an enjoyable, restful break. With the arrival of January we welcome a new year and look forward to an amazing beginning of 2026 here at AWES.

We dive back into things pretty quickly with two amazing guests joining us this month for assemblies. We also have Tim Horton's Camp workshops happening for our grade 3-6 students. Exciting!

As always, please reach out should you ever have questions or concerns.

All the best,

N. MacDonald

Contact AWES...

902-435-8305

awes@hrce.ca

<https://awe.hrce.ca/>



Thanks to all who made the festive days before the break so special!



Upcoming...

Jan. 5th - First Day back!

Jan. 13th - Guest Julia Tynes Assembly.

Jan. 27th - International Holocaust Remembrance Day

Feb. 3rd - Guest Keonte Beals Assembly

Feb. 16th - Holiday.



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.

It's that time of year...



Guidelines for school and/or bus cancellations due to weather

It is HRCE's goal to communicate any changes to the regular operations of schools and/or school 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; or
- 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.



If there are any changes to our regular operations, we will communicate in the following ways:

- 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 X (formerly Twitter) at twitter.com/hrce_ns
- On Instagram at [instagram.com/hrce_ns](https://www.instagram.com/hrce_ns)



How does Halifax Regional Centre for Education (HRCE) decide on school and/or bus cancellations?

- By 4:30 a.m., HRCE staff begin to gather information from:
 - A contracted weather service that provides radar and satellite imagery, real-time road conditions and weather warnings;
 - A meteorologist who provides forecast details, level and type of precipitation and impact on road conditions;
 - HRCE's transportation service providers, who provide updates on road conditions in their area;
 - Municipal and provincial transportation staff; and
 - Other local weather services, including Environment Canada and The Weather Network. By 5:30 a.m., HRCE staff make recommendations to the Regional Executive Director (or designate), who then makes the final decision. This decision is communicated as close to 6:00 a.m. as possible.

Remember: Parents/guardians always have the right to keep their child home from school if they believe that the travelling conditions are unsuitable.

Most days, students will be spending time outside at recess & lunch. As the weather begins to turn, it is important that students are dressed appropriately with jacket, hat, mittens, etc. We keep many items on hand at the school. Please do not hesitate to reach out if your child requires items.



[Please click here For further information on these guidelines.](#)

Learn about the Influenza vaccine

FAST FACTS ABOUT THE FLU VACCINE

- Influenza (the flu) is virus that peaks in transmission in the fall and winter months
- Most people are mildly ill when they contract the flu but sometimes the flu can be serious and require admission to the hospital
- Children under 6 years are at the highest risk of serious complications from the flu
- The flu and RSV can occur at the same time making children more at risk of needing hospitalization
- The flu vaccine is recommended yearly for children 6 months and older to protect against serious complications of the flu

Scan to book



FLU VACCINE SAFETY

- The flu vaccine cannot cause the flu
- Serious side effects are rare, affecting less than 1 in 1000 people
- Common side effects include pain and swelling at the insertion site



HOW TO BOOK YOUR VACCINE

- In Nova Scotia, flu vaccines can be booked online and are free of cost
- You can also call to book at 1-833-797-7772. If you or your child does not have a health card, please call rather than booking online

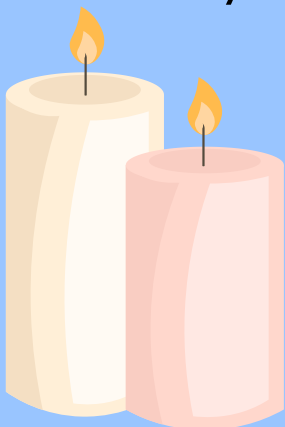


What happens when a school loses power?

Learn more at hrce.ca/families/cancellations under Power Outage Information for Families



International Holocaust Remembrance Day
January 27th 2026



APPS EVERY PARENT SHOULD BE AWARE OF



SNAPCHAT

- Disappearing messages
- Snap Map location sharing
- Addictive features (streaks)
- Sexting & adult contact



INSTAGRAM

- Body-image pressure
- Hidden DM requests
- Teens use secret "Finstas"
- Exposure to adult content



ROBLOX

- Inappropriate games
- Unmoderated private servers
- Chat with strangers
- Pressure to buy Robux



TIKTOK

- Highly addictive feed
- Harmful viral trends
- Attention fragmentation
- Frequent adult content



DISCORD

- High grooming risk
- Adult/NSFW content
- Harassment & cyberbullying
- Unmoderated servers



YOUTUBE

- Inappropriate content
- High risk of grooming
- Addictive short form content
- Attention fragmentation



CHARACTER AI

- Sexualized roleplay bots
- High grooming-style risk
- Fake "AI relationships" with kids
- Encourages secrecy from parents



TELEGRAM

- Encrypted hidden content
- Large, risky group chats
- Minimal moderation
- Hard for parents to monitor



REDDIT

- Unfiltered communities
- Adult/disturbing content
- Harmful topics easily found
- Anonymous users & predators



CHATGPT

- 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.

WE NEED YOUR VOICE!

Have you considered joining our School Advisory Council?

What is a School Advisory Council (SAC)?

The SAC group is made up of staff, parents/guardians, and community members. The SAC serves as an advisory group to school administration and provides an important voice that helps support student success and well-being.



When does the SAC meet?

We generally meet monthly at 6:00 PM. Our next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, November 18th.



If you would like to know more about the SAC, please reach out to the school.

